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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
With Saipan casinos back on the table, how should the issue be decided: By voters acting on a legislative initiative or by lawmakers acting on a bill?

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Gas Prices
What you pay at your gas station depends on an array of factors.
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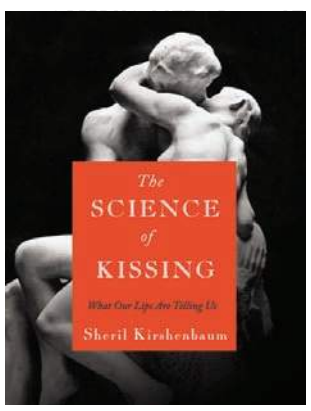
Mock Trials
Marianas Baptist Academy rules the 2011 CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition.



The Kiss
Birds do it. Bees do it. No, not that! This is about kissing.
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Four senators off to DC

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Four senators will be flying to Washington, D.C. not only to personally hand to Congress their recommendation to grant improved immigration status to long-term foreign workers in the CNMI, but also to meet with federal officials on matters critical to the islands such as capital improvement project funds and federalization impact.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), and Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) will leave this weekend for a one-week official trip to the nation's capital.

Hofschneider is the chairman of the Senate Federal Relations and Independent Agencies Committee, which held public hearings on the Interior Department's recommendation to Congress to grant improved immigration status to foreign workers who have been legally residing in the CNMI for at least five years.

Based on those public hearings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, Hofschneider's committee issued a final report recommending that foreign workers who have been in the CNMI for at least 10 years as of May 2008 be given a status similar to those granted to Freely Associated States citizens.

Hofschneider said nothing beats the power of face-to-face communication, as he talked about the need to personally

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Firm to take over failed hotel projects in Marpi

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Babauta

A California-based company that also has financial investments in Hong Kong has formed a new firm in the CNMI to try to build a multi-million hotel resort in Marpi/San Roque where two South Korean investors had earlier planned and later abandoned hotels projects worth $80 million and $120 million.

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Ex-DPW official acquitted of 3 charges

»But found guilty of disturbing the peace

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo scolded a former Department of Public Works official yesterday for "inappropriate behavior" but acquitted him of charges relating to an alleged sexual contact with a female minor.

Joseph Inos Jr., 33, was found not guilty of assault and battery, false arrest, and misconduct in public office. He was, however, found guilty of

See EX-DPW on Page 4

WOMEN'S DAY CLARISSA V. DAVID
Members and officers of the CNMI Women Association join other women from various backgrounds in the community in celebrating International Women's Day in a luncheon at Saipan World Resort yesterday. ***See story on Page 2***

Youth Congress election yields 28 pct. voter turnout. PAGE3
FDA, DHS probe sale of unapproved Viagra. PAGE 5

Local

NEW RESTING PLACE HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Construction of the almost $3 million new Marpi public cemetery is expected to be completed in a few weeks, the first phase of which includes 2,500 double crypts or double-stack occupancy crypts for a total of 5,000 burials. Human remains at the Wireless Hill cemetery on Capital Hill will be exhumed and reburied en masse at the new Marpi public cemetery.

Women celebrate victories, confront current challenges

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

As the whole world marked International Women's Day yesterday, women in the CNMI were urged not only to celebrate the progress and achievements they have accomplished but also to reflect on the challenges they have to confront in the community and across the globe.

These sentiments resonated during the International Women's Day luncheon and get-together at the Saipan World Resort that drew about 50 women from various backgrounds.

The gathering, organized by the CNMI Women Association, highlighted the importance of commemorating International Women's Day and Women's Month.

Celebrated every March 8, International Women's Day is a global celebration of women and their economic, political, and social achievements and contributions in the society.

Remy Buniag, Special Assistant for Women's Affairs Office, said women like State Secretary Hillary Clinton, first lady Michelle Obama, Superior Court associate judge Ramona Manglona, Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro, Rep. Teresita Santos, and Sen. Jovita Taimañao show how much the strength of women has evolved and how it continues to inspire and motivate others.

"We should continue to unite our efforts to showcase what women can do to make our communities a better place for all," she said.

According to Buniag, International Women's Day should remind all women to reflect and reevaluate present day challenges.

"As women, we must continue to address the various obstacles we face in areas such as patriarchal structures, legislative and political decisions, corporate entities, criminal menaces, cultural and economic ignorance," said Buniag.

CNMI Women Association president Susana Blas Deleon Guerrero said the growing social and economic problems in the community such as unemployment and loss of indigenous language are caused largely by the influx of foreign cultural influences and other factors.

She encouraged members of their group, composed of a pool of women that aim to assist families in need of help, to put personal and political differences aside and work cooperatively.

"We can meet the challenges ahead and fulfill our goals and objectives in bringing about positive influence, and change the lives of many [families]

See WOMEN on Next Page

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Registration Deadline: March 10, 2011

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Youth Congress election yields 28 pct. voter turnout

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Voter turnout at the CNMI Youth Congress election held Monday was only at 28 percent after a small number of the registered students turned up at polling sites to cast their ballots.

Legislative Bureau records showed that 1,126 high school students had registered to vote but only 313 actually participated in the election.

Among the seven schools that took part in the election, Kagman High School had the lowest turnout at just 7 percent after only 24 students of the 339 registered voters cast their ballots.

Saipan Southern High School had the second lowest turnout at just 18 percent when only 67 of the 379 registered students actually voted.

At Marianas High School, 210 students had registered to vote; only 97 actually showed up, translating to 46 percent. Rota High School had a 47 percent turnout: 46 voted against 98 registrants.

Of the 39 expected voters from Tinian Jr./Senior High School, only 24 cast their ballots—a turnout of 62 percent.

Grace Christian Academy and Marianas Baptist Academy were the top performers in Monday's election, with 30 of the 35 registered GCA students voting. At MBA, 25 of the 26 expected voters joined the activity.

Bureau director Glenna SP-Reyes said the winning candidates will be announced as soon as House floor leader George N. Camacho certifies the election results.

The bureau, she said, is also in the process of planning and organizing the inaugural festivities. The inaugural Mass is on April 9, 6pm, at the San Jose Church on Saipan while the swearing in ceremony will be on April 16, 10am, at the House of Representatives chamber.

'Surprising outcome'

SP-Reyes admitted being surprised at the low turnout.

"This is the first election conducted after the passage of Public Law 17-22. The law provides for new requirements for voter and candidates. The registration of eligible voters under the new law already indicated the decrease in the number of registered voters as compared to previous elections. The voter turnout, however, is surprising as we anticipated majority of those newly registered voters to come out and vote," she told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

She declined to speculate on the cause of the low participation, saying she cannot speak on behalf of the students.

"We did provide each school and the candidates a copy of the new law, as well as flyers and pamphlets for distribution. Perhaps conducting a survey among the youths will provide us with the information we need to determine how better ways to encourage greater participation by the youths," she added.

The election fielded no complaints other than a few calls to verify the registration of some students whose names were not on the registration roster.

The Youth Congress election was supposed to take place in October last year but was postponed following the signing into law of P.L. 17-22, which reduced the number of youth senator seats from 25 to 10, based on the number of participating public and private high schools. It also increased the term of each youth senator from one year to two years.

The Youth Congress, created through P.L. 8-27, seeks to provide a system that allows the youth to make recommendations to lawmakers on youth programs.

WOMEN

From Page 2

for the better, and empower them to have hope for the future," she added.

Yesterday's event also featured activities for guests, sharing of inspirational stories and messages, as well as discussion of current issues for women in the CNMI.

Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), adviser for the women's group, vowed to work on legislation to address these social, economic, and political concerns affecting women that were raised during the event.

House Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) said they plan to present a series of workshops that aim to empower women in the community.

These workshops, to be held at Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center, are Human Resources Development on March 10; Women's Access to Health and Child Care Services, March 12; Violence Against Women, March 15; Money Management, March 17; Women in Leadership Roles, March 19, Effective Communication, March 24; and Parenting, March 26.

Ogumoro disclosed that there will also be a meeting with Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan on Feb. 22, the venue to be announced later. The celebration will culminate with the 9am Mass at the Mount Carmel Cathedral on March 27.

She urged all women to be actively involved in the community and believe that they are not alone.

"It's important that they take advantage of the services that are available for them in order that we can easily meet our goal of women fully participating in the development of the CNMI," she added.

For more information, call CNMI Women Association at 322-5520.

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TOYOTA

'Continue funding patients' transportation costs'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) has asked Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez to temporarily suspend the Department of Public Health's new policy transferring the responsibility of paying for the inter-island transportation costs of Rota and Tinian patients to their respective mayors' offices.

"This rule change is disastrous for the health of our people," Manglona said in a March 4 letter to Villagomez.

He said the Rota and Tinian mayors' offices do not have funding set aside to pay for patients' transportation costs.

Effective Feb. 1, inter-island air transportation costs of Rota and Tinian patients have been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Rota and Tinian mayors' accounts.

DPH also stopped the subsistence allowances of medical referral patients and their escorts.

"While I understand your need to cut unnecessary expense, access to medical treatment should never be among these cuts. As our mayors' budgets are slim, our people will be forced to go without the treatment they need. I ask for your consideration and suspend this change, at least until a new budget is passed which might provide funds for medical referral to Tinian and Rota," Manglona told Villagomez.

Manglona has yet to receive a response from DPH as of yesterday afternoon.

The Senate president said while DPH has a budget line item specifically for medical referral, no such appropriation exists for Rota and Tinian.

"Transferring these costs to Rota and Tinian likely means many of our people may not be able to get treatment," he said.

Rota and Tinian patients already pay much more for almost every health care service in addition to not having an obstetrician/gynecologist, physical/occupational therapist, mammogram service, hemodialysis, eye doctors or dental services, Manglona added.

The lack of these services, Manglona said, means that serious and life-threatening conditions may go untreated.

Mt. Carmel cross signals start of Lenten season

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Community volunteers pose for a photo after the installation of a towering wooden cross at the Mount Carmel Cathedral grounds yesterday afternoon.

CLARISSA DAVID

Community volunteers helped place a towering wooden cross at the Mount Carmel Cathedral grounds yesterday afternoon, indicating the start of the observance of the Lenten season among Catholic faithful in the CNMI.

Seven volunteers, including staff of Good Day Coordinating Inc., put up the wooden cross, which is the same cross that will be erected at the top of Mt. Tapochau on April 22, Good Friday.

The cross, made of ironwood, measures over 40 feet tall and its crosspiece spans about 18 to 20 feet.

Tony Cabrera, one of the volunteers, said their group has been putting up the wooden cross a day before Ash Wednesday for over 20 years now through the efforts of Tom Palacios who serves as the volunteers' coordinator.

"This is one of the legacies of Bishop Tomas Camacho and a part of the community's tradition every Lent. We want to keep doing this every year to remind us all about the death of our Lord," Cabrera told *Saipan Tribune*.

Cabrera thanked Good Day Coordinating Inc. president Takahashi Manami and manager Alex Aquiningoc who have been providing their services for the activity for more than five years now as well as Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios who oversees the putting up of the cross.

"The Diocese of Chalan Kanoa is very grateful that the people have not forgotten this tradition and continue to provide help for the diocese," he added.

Cabrera encouraged the community to visit their parishes today to observe Ash Wednesday and participate in the annual trek to Mt. Tapochau on Good Friday.

Man allegedly hit boy, 16, with extension cord

Police arrested Monday a man who allegedly hit a 16-year-old boy with an extension cord and slapped him several times on Tinian.

Eugene M. San Nicolas, 36, was arrested for assault and battery, child abuse, contempt of court, and disturbing the peace.

Bail was initially set at $6,000 cash. San Nicolas was set to appear in Superior Court on Saipan yesterday afternoon for his initial court appearance.

Police officers responded to the house of San Nicolas after receiving a call about a fight in the area on Feb. 18, 2011 at 8:40pm.

Detective Barbara K. Arend said that when the officers arrived, San Nicolas yelled at them to take the boy away.

Arend said the boy told police that when he went out of the house, San Nicolas hit his left forearm with an extension cord, then slapped him thrice in the back.

San Nicolas allegedly hit the boy again on the right hand with the cord.

Arend said a police officer saw swelling on the boy's back, left arm, behind the left ear, left forearm, and right hand.

The detective said San Nicolas admitted hitting the boy with the cord and slapping him for talking him back. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

EX-DPW

From Page 1

disturbing the peace.

Govendo said there will be no prison term. Sentencing will be on March 23.

"Mr. Inos, your behavior is inappropriate. Totally inappropriate," Govendo told the defendant.

Inappropriate conduct, however, is not always a crime, Govendo said.

Emerging from the courtroom, Inos burst into tears as family members and friends hugged him.

His father, former Rota mayor Joseph Inos Sr., was also in the courtroom, together with former Coastal Resources Management Office director Felipe Atalig and other family members and some friends.

The judge said sexual harassment is happening right now in government offices. "It has been accepted in the Commonwealth for many, many years just like domestic violence," he said.

Govendo said things have changed, but people in the Commonwealth are slow to adopt these changes.

Govendo said the parents of the girl in this case did the right thing by coming forward and reporting the matter to the authorities. "I wish more parents will do that," he added.

In this case, Govendo said, he is puzzled why no one in the Department of Public Safety bothered to talk to Inos. He said police should have gotten statements from Inos and that perhaps could have diffused the situation.

Govendo told Inos that his behavior—the way he was talking to the then 17-year-old girl and touching her hands and other parts of her body—was inappropriate.

"Those are not things bosses do!" he said.

However, the court has to make a decision whether a crime was committed, he said.

In the case of the assault and battery charge, Govendo said there is no proof that Inos committed the offense.

"There is no crime of freaking out a teenager," he said, adding that he does not consider the teenager's body parts that were touched private organs.

Govendo said the teenager at one time wanted to get out from the office, but Inos tried to stop her. "Maybe you wanted to talk to her or wanted to have sex with her and other reasons we never know," the judge said.

Govendo said the girl stood up but Inos told her to sit down and relax. "It's not false arrest," the judge pointed out.

As to the charge of misconduct in public office, Govendo said Inos' behavior was totally inappropriate, but it does not rise to misconduct in public office. At that time, Inos was DPW's Technical Services Division director. He later resigned from DPW.

In one instance, as Inos was driving, he reached out for the hand of the girl. The girl pulled back her hand, but Inos held it again. For that, Govendo said, the defendant deprived the teenager her peace.

"You are guilty of that count," he told Inos.

Govendo emphasized that the complaint against Inos was not frivolous.

The Office of the Attorney General had alleged that on Aug. 16, 2010, Inos had sexual contact with the then 17-year-old girl and that he detained her against her will. The girl was a Workforce Investment Agency trainee at the time.

Assistant attorney general Shelli Neal prosecuted the case. Assistant public defender Adam Miles represented Inos.

FIRM

From Page 1

The hotel project is on a 5.1-hectare public land in the Marpi/San Roque area, north of the former The Palms Resort.

Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta said the department decided to move on to the next investor—Island Ventures LLC—when Leisure Planner failed last month to deliver on a $120 million proposed project.

Flame Sako had also leased the property from DPL, only to abandon its $80 million hotel project last year. The investor has yet to pay DPL over $55,000 in land lease arrears plus interest.

Babauta said Island Ventures LLC, which "is a new business incorporated in the CNMI," already paid the $2,500 application fee.

He said the company has 60 days to submit all requirements before a lease agreement with DPL could be signed.

Island Ventures was the first of at least three groups of investors waiting to lease the property if and when Leisure Planner drops its proposal.

Babauta said the three groups are aware and are ready to comply with DPL's new conditions including a one-year advance payment of the land lease, and a minimum of $3 million in an escrow account.

He said DPL instituted these new policies to help gauge the seriousness of investors approaching the department to lease public lands.

Other investors

Island Ventures is not the only group of investors interested in investing in the CNMI.

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) said a group of investors has expressed interest in operating a casino on Saipan with at least $300 million investment.

Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) also said another group of investors are interested in investing at least $5 million for a casino on Saipan.

However, the bill legalizing casino gambling on Saipan is still under committee review.

Marianas Resort Development Corp., Babauta said, is still current in its land lease payments to DPL and has the necessary financial requirements to build a $300 million Matua Bay Resort on Tinian. Unlike on Saipan, casino operation is legal on Tinian and Rota.

"MRDC is still an active investor," Babauta told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

He said MRDC is changing some portions of its architectural and engineering design to incorporate energy-efficient design or the use of renewable energy at the planned facility.

Another investor, Hong Kong-based Kevin International, is expected to sign in the next few weeks a lease agreement with DPL to build a new $30 million, 300-room condo-hotel on a 5-hectare property in San Antonio.

Besides Flame Sako and Leisure Planner, there are also other investors that have abandoned plans to invest in the CNMI. These include Neo Gold Wings Paradise, which leased a property on Tinian to build a $1 billion casino hotel, only to drop the project later and owe DPL almost a million in land lease arrears and interest.

FOUR

From Page 1

hand over the Senate recommendation to Congress.

Nonresident worker groups said they applaud the CNMI Senate for recommending improved status for long-term foreign workers. Many of them who want a pathway to citizenship or outright U.S. citizenship said the final decision still rests with Congress.

Senators, for their part, said it is better that the CNMI's input—through the CNMI Senate recommendation—is entered as an official position that the Congress could consider as it decides on the issue.

Torres, chairman of the Senate Health Committee, said yesterday that the group will also be meeting with federal health officials on matters that will help improve healthcare in the CNMI, including increased funding for hospital equipment.

He said he is also requesting the governor to reprogram $4.5 million in Section 702 Capital Improvement Project funding to buy a new CT scan, a hyperbaric chamber, and hospital beds for the Commonwealth Health Center.

Cruz, for his part, said yesterday that important CNMI concerns including immigration and CIP funding need to be personally communicated to federal officials.

"That's better than sitting here and wait[ing] for things to happen. This will help the CNMI better communicate its concerns to federal officials," he said.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan said he will accommodate the CNMI senators when they get to Washington, D.C.

The senators said they will meet with other federal agency officials and staff on the impact of the federalization law or Public Law 110-229 on the CNMI, capital improvement project funding, other federal grants, and transportation, among other things.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial was also in Washington, D.C. last week to meet with federal officials on issues affecting the CNMI and to attend the National Governors Association winter meeting.

FDA, DHS probe sale of China-made erectile dysfunction drug

»Store operator in western Garapan arrested

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are jointly investigating a retail store on Saipan that is allegedly selling unapproved erectile dysfunction drugs from China.

Authorities have already arrested the operator of SU US MART, Wei Yuan Ou, and a complaint was filed against him yesterday in federal court for allegedly selling misbranded drugs in interstate commerce.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge John A. Houston allowed Ou to remain at liberty under some conditions.

The judge ordered a private counsel for Ou, who will be arraigned tomorrow, Thursday, at 10am.

The case was unsealed yesterday.

Garrett Chinn, special agent with the FDA, Office of Criminal Investigations Honolulu Domicile Office, stated in an affidavit that his office is currently investigating SU US MART with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations.

Chinn said their investigation showed that Ou bought unapproved erectile dysfunction drugs made in China and sold them at his retail store, the SU US MART in western Garapan.

Chinn said an undercover agent managed to purchase 17 tablets of the illicit drug from Ou on Feb. 14, 2011.

He said the tablets were imprinted with the marking "VAG" and resembled the same blue diamond shape as the prescription drug Viagra, which is manufactured by Pfizer, Inc.

Ou apparently told the undercover agent that he normally sells the tablets for $5 each but he allegedly agreed to sell 17 tablets to the agent for $70. Ou then allegedly gave the agent a phone number that he could call if he wants to buy more of the same tablets in the future.

On Feb. 17, Chinn said, the undercover agent went back to SU US MART and bought from Ou 12 of the same blue diamond shaped tablets for $48.

Erectile dysfunction drugs like Viagra are prescription medicines that require a doctor's prescription for purchase.

MPLT questions bill that limits CUC's common stock to NMDs

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Marianas Public Land Trust has raised several concerns about a bill that seeks to turn over the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. into the hands of persons of Northern Marianas descent only, including redirecting interest earned on MPLT fund, a lack of guarantee that this will resolve CUC's financial woes and the possible loss of federal funds that CUC currently receives.

MPLT is among those commenting on House Bill 17-164.

Alvaro Santos, chairman of the MPLT board of trustees, also questioned whether interest income from public lands investments would be considered "payment of shares" to NMDs.

MPLT is the government agency tasked with managing the money generated from public land leases.

Last night, the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications held a public hearing on HB 17-164 on Capital Hill.

Committee chair Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) asked MPLT and other entities to submit written comments or testify on the bill that Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) introduced.

HB 17-164, which repeals Public Law 16-17, seeks to establish the Northern Marianas Utility Corp. as a profit corporation to operate and deliver utility services in place of CUC.

Under the bill, shareholders of common stock may be only NMDs as defined in the Constitution and may hold only one voting share at a value of $1,000 per share.

Shareholders of preferred stock may be NMDs or non-NMDs and may hold non-voting shares of up to 10,000 shares.

MPLT's Santos also said HB 17-164 is not clear whether it will eliminate the Public Utilities Commission whose mandate is to ensure that CUC rates are just and reasonable.

Santos said the MPLT trustees suggest that Torres' PUTC Committee "review" HB 17-164 "and consider that substantial amendments are necessary in addition to undertaking stringent legal review."

"There should also be a cost-analysis of this unfunded mandate and consideration of the consequences of such legislation for the community inclusive of the use of MPLT-remitted interest income," Santos told Torres in a three-page comment on the bill yesterday.

Santos said MPLT's major concern lies in HB 17-164's provision on investment of interest earned of MPLT's funds.

Section 14 of the bill requires the Legislature to appropriate the interest earned from MPLT to "support the utility services operation under the management and control of NMUC."

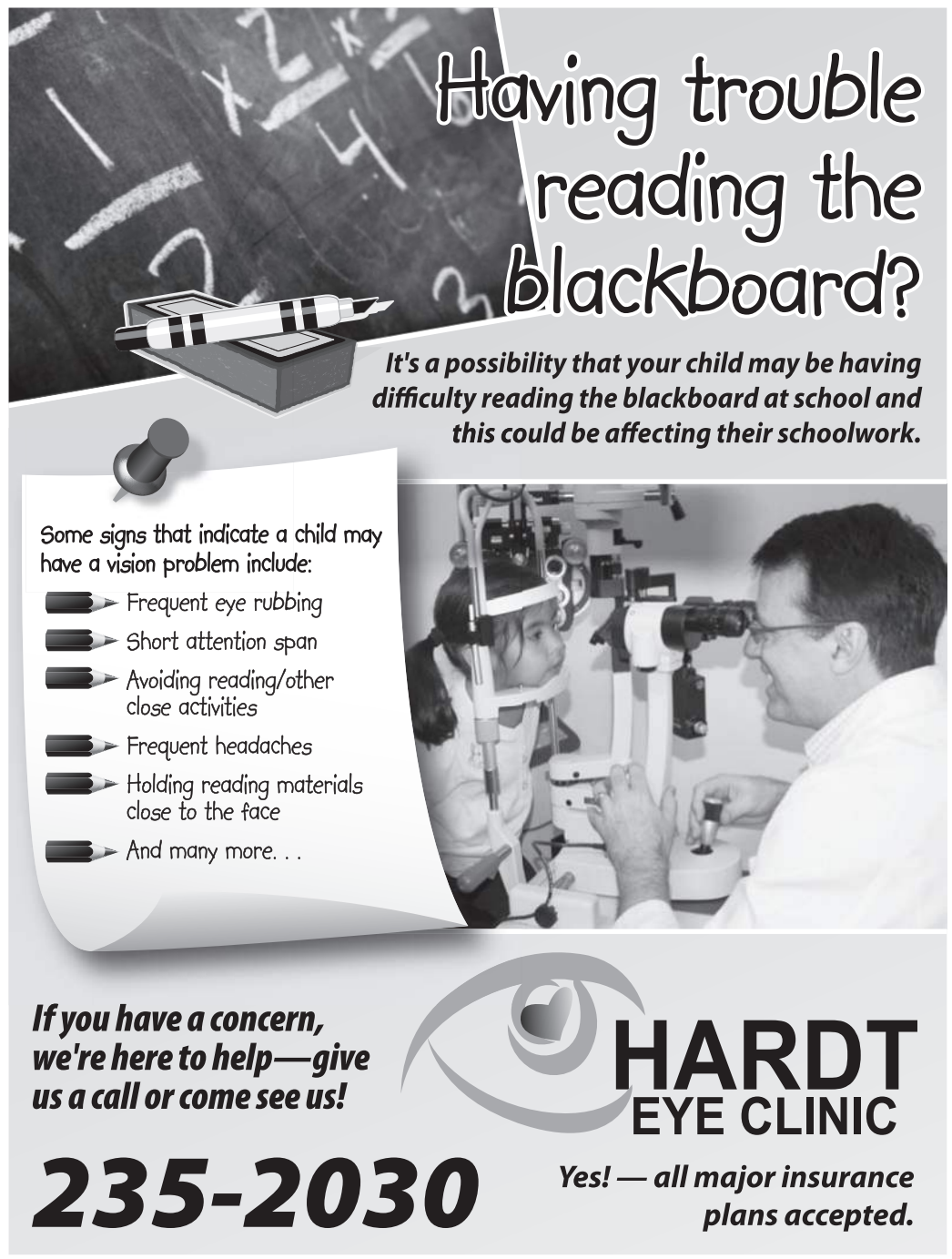
But Santos said this provision also states that all money appropriated for such purposes shall be distributed equally to all persons of NMDs who subscribed to such shares of common or preferred stocks or both.

"What does this provision mean and how does it work? Instead of appropriating interest income for the benefit of the people of the CNMI, MPLT-remitted interest income would go to operate as a capital investment of a for-profit corporation," he told Torres.

Rep. Joe Palacios (R-Saipan), in an interview yesterday, said in his view, the Legislature should also focus on amending the definition of persons of Northern Marianas descent.

Among other things, he said, adopted children of non-NMD parent or parents are considered NMD and are therefore allowed to own lands in the CNMI, while the children of a couple who is an NMD and a non-NMD won't be able to later on pass their parents' lands on to their children and their children.

"How can a child with zero NMD bloodline fully own a land and pass it on to his or her children whereas those with an NMD bloodline, whether 100 percent or .01 percent cannot? It's not fair," Palacios said.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kids
Marianas Cup
Beach Volleyball Festival
19th Annual Beach Volleyball Festival
Registration Deadline: Friday, March 11, 2011 at 5PM
Register with Mili Saiki at milisaiki@hotmail.com or call (670) 288-9660
Date : Sunday, March 13, 2011
Location : Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan
Time : Registration check-in 8:00-9:00am, games will start at 9am
Entry Fee : $10 per team member ($5 discount for NMIVA members) includes games, Gatorade, t-shirts and prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place
Divisions : [1] 14 U • [2] 17 U
Teams : 4-person co-ed, one female player on the court at all times • Up to 5 players per team
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Law enforcers learn how to handle improvised bombs

Ninety-six local law enforcers completed yesterday a two-day training on how to properly deal with improvised bombs. The training, sponsored by the U.S. Army, was held at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Today, Wednesday, about 100 more local law enforcers will undergo a similar training being organized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Marvin K. Seman, acting special assistant for the CNMI Office of Homeland Security, told *Saipan Tribune* that the improvised explosive device awareness training began on Monday and will end tomorrow, Thursday.

Seman said that trainers from the U.S. Army Asia Pacific-Improvised Explosive Device Fusion Center are teaching local law enforcers to be more aware of improvised bombs in their surroundings.

Seman said the first batch is composed of 96 lawmen from the Department of Public Safety's Police and Fire Divisions on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota; Commonwealth Ports Authority on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota; Juvenile Detention Unit; Transportation Security Administration; and CNMI Customs.

Seman said about 100 more law enforcers from the same agencies will be joined by those from the Superior Court and CNMI Supreme Court marshals for the same two-day training today, Wednesday.

Police officer Jason Tarkong, one of the trainees, said that multi-enforcement agencies are involved in the training. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Fund extends health insurance program enrollment

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund has extended the enrollment period for the Government Group Health Insurance Program after being bombarded with calls and requests from members.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez said the Fund will hold another 30-day open season enrollment for the program to accommodate members who missed the first deadline.

The enrollment season is usually every November of each year. Since a significant volume of active members failed to register the last time, Villagomez said the Fund made the decision to extend the deadline accommodate them.

He said the open season is from March 1 to 31 this year. During this period, government employees can enroll in the health insurance program for themselves and their dependents.

"Employees planning to retire under the defined benefit plan in the next 12 months should enroll during this open enrollment if they want the option to continue coverage into retirement," Villagomez said in a memorandum issued to all department and activity heads.

Villagomez explained that Fund regulations do not allow members to enroll after retirement.

"Also, be aware that the current insurer for group health is Aetna Global Benefits. If you are insured with another company, that carrier may not continue your coverage into your retirement. Even if your health insurer will continue coverage into your retirement years, the Retirement Fund cannot contribute to retiree health insurance other than provided through Group Health," explained Villagomez, adding that the extended enrollment is only for active members and not for current retirees.

BEH checks 38 establishments in Feb.; one closed down

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Health's Bureau of Environmental Health shut down the Tropical Blend Spa last month for serious violation of health and sanitation standards

In a three-page report, the bureau reprimanded and issued a closure order to Tropical Blend Spa in Garapan on Feb. 25 for noncompliance with health and sanitation requirements.

Tropical Blend Spa was one of 38 retail food and drinking establishments the bureau checked in February. The establishment may reopen as soon as it corrects the deficiencies cited by the bureau.

The bureau earlier explained that a closure order usually indicates a specific timeframe to correct a store's deficiencies and violations. Their reopening depends on the gravity and nature of the violations they committed. For example, an establishment that needs to replace certain equipment may take longer than a week or a month compared to other minor deficiencies.

The bureau recorded five establishments that were closed in October 2010, the start of the first quarter. Only one was found noncompliant with standards in February.

A total of 12 retail establishments were closed down in the four months of fiscal year 2011: five in October; three in November; three in December; and one in January.

BEH inspects retail, eating, and drinking establishments each month to monitor compliance with health requirements and sanitation standards. These establishments are given rates ranging from A to C, while serious violators are closed down. This helps prevent harm to workers, property, the environment, and the public.

In February, 36 establishments got "A" ratings, which means they were found adhering to bureau standards and requirements. Only one got a "B" rating and none got a "C."

'Eat Right with Color' recipe contest on Saturday

The CNMI Nutrition Month Committee invites the community to the first "Eat Right with Color" student recipe contest and cook-off this Saturday, March 12, at the Pacific Islands Club. The event is open to the public for sampling from 9:30am to 11:30am.

Thirty-three student finalists from eight public and private schools in the CNMI will be competing to prepare colorful and tasty dishes in five categories: healthy snacks, healthy salads, healthy appetizers, vegetarian entrees, and main entrees.

The students' dishes will be judged based on the number of colors (fruits and vegetables) used, number of locally-sourced fruits and vegetables, nutrient content, creativity, presentation, and taste.

Prizes for the winning student teams include waterpark passes from Pacific Islands Club, Mega Zone gametime vouchers, gift certificates for fresh local produce from the Sabalu Market provided by the Commonwealth Cancer Association, culinary promotional items from the Public School System, and cash.

The schools represented by the winning student teams will each receive a $500 purchase order for sports equipment from the Public School System.

The contest is part of events lined up for Nutrition Month, an annual nutrition education campaign spearheaded by the American Dietetic Association to encourage healthier eating habits and a physically active lifestyle. This year's theme is "Eat Right with Color."

The CNMI Nutrition Month Committee includes the Public School System, the Commonwealth Cancer Association, NMC-CREES, and the Women, Infants, and Children program.

In addition to the student recipe contest and cook-off, the Nutrition Month Committee is spearheading a "Healthy Lunch Promotion" with participating restaurants around the island. Last Saturday, March 5, "Eat Right with Color" food demonstrations were conducted at participating grocery stories on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

For more information, contact CNMI Nutrition Month Committee chair Hee Jae Lee at heejae.lee@cnmipss.org or 237-3050. ***(PR)***

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Category A: General Dislocated Workers. To qualify, an individual must meet the following three criteria:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment;
2. Is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; OR has been employed or attached to the workforce for a duration sufficient to demonstrate to WIA, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a state unemployment compensation law; and
3. Is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.

Category B: Plant Closure. To qualify, an individual must meet one of the following three criteria:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, or enterprise;
2. Is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or
3. For purposes of eligibility to receive services other than training, intensive or supportive services under WIA, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made general announcement that such facility will close.

Category C: Self Employed or Unemployed. To qualify, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. Was self employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters.

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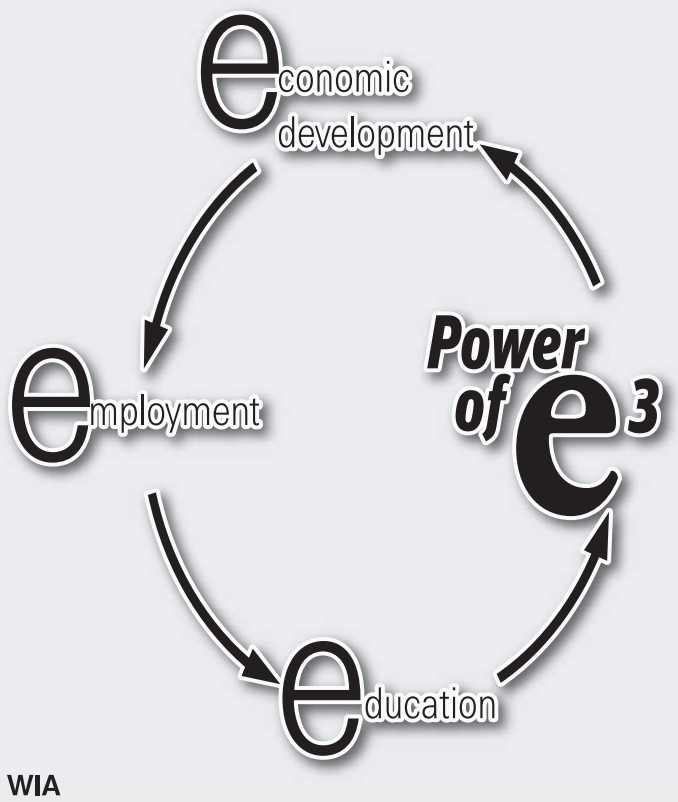

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Tinian Health Center gets a new physician

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After a few months without a physician, the Tinian Health Center finally found a permanent doctor for the island's medical needs. Dr. Stephan Lebamoff replaced Dr. Priyawathan Wijay, who left the center in November last year.

Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the Executive Branch allowed the center to hire Lebamoff for $130,000 per annum.

"He's already onboard and we're happy that we now have a permanent doctor who will treat our people," said the mayor.

Although Tinian Health Center falls under the umbrella of the Department of Public Health, the salaries of its personnel are sourced from the municipality's revenues and budget.

The mayor disclosed that Lebamoff used to work at Tinian Health Center during the administration of former mayor Francisco Borja and the early part of former mayor Jose San Nicolas' term.

Lebamoff's contract is for one year, with an option to renew for another year.

His specialty is family medicine and he is formerly affiliated with Kahuku Hospital in Hawaii. He studied at Indiana University School of Medicine and has 24 years of related experience.

"Besides Dr. Lebamoff, it's our goal to bring more doctors to the island so we can minimize the medical referral cost," Dela Cruz said. He conceded, though, that this would be at some point in the future due to the municipality's limited budget.

Dela Cruz earlier said that enticing medical professionals to work at THC is being stymied by the current economic slump.

Saipan Tribune learned that the center has a total of 15 nurses. THC also has a physician assistant and midlevel health provider.

It accommodates about 50 patients daily during regular working hours.

Matua Riders clean up library grounds

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Matua Riders pose for a group photo during their volunteer work at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe last March 5. From left, Manny Cabrera, Peter Togawa, Renita C. Camacho, Leo Ganacias, Ed Flores, Jovie Flores, Cassidee Flores, Vince Lizama, John Kapileo, and Pogi Santos.

Members of the Matua Riders as well as their family members once again volunteered their services to the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last Saturday morning.

The volunteers cut bushes and raked leaves as part of their outreach services for the community.

Children's library associate Erlinda Naputi acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the members and families of the Matua Riders in helping maintain a clean environment at the public library.

She said the efforts of these Matua Riders members and their families, who took time off of their busy schedules, are much appreciated.

"The assistance offered by the Matua Riders helps a lot especially in these hard economic times. We would like to thank them for their unending support to the public library," Naputi told Saipan Tribune.

Founded on Jan. 31, 2010, the Matua Riders has about 40 members whose goal is to provide services to the community through volunteer work and donations. ***(Clarissa V. David)***

PIC honors 55 Russian female guests on Women's Day

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Islands Club gave its female Russian guests fresh roses, freshly baked chocolate surprises, and greeting cards while their daughters got special PIC white teddy bears in celebration of Women's Day on March 8.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pacific Islands Club gave a wonderful surprise to its fifty-five female Russian guests in celebration of Women's Day on March 8.

Observed annually around the world, Women's Day celebrates the various achievements and contributions of women in society.

Web marketing manager Elly Stoilova said Women's Day is one of the most important holidays in Russia as they celebrate the importance of women in the family and in society, with the holiday acting as a substitute for Mother's Day.

"On this day, women of all ages are recognized for their work, love, and devotion," she added.

Stoilova said the 55 Russian women were given giveaways such as fresh red roses, a freshly baked chocolate surprise, and a greeting card while their daughters received special PIC white teddy bears.

According to Stoilova, this is the fourth year that PIC honored its female Russian guests with special giveaways. They only gave greeting cards in the past, she added.

"This is one of the many ways for our hotel to show our valuable Russian guests that they are welcome, to make them feel comfortable during their long stay away from home, or to remind them about the great time they had on Saipan, as well as to show our appreciation for choosing Mariana Islands as a destination for their holiday," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Stoilova said they send specially designed greeting cards to the rooms of their Russian guests on most public holidays in Russia, including New Year, Motherland Defender's Day, and Easter holiday.

She said PIC also sends digital greeting cards to its valuable Russian guests via email.

SHIPPING SCHEDULE

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MELL SPRINGLEAF	017E	2/26 Sat	2/24 Thu	2/24 Thu	2/22 Tue	2/19 Sat	3/4 Fri	2/28 Mon	2/27 Sun	2/20 Sun	2/20 Sun	2/28 Mon	3/4 Fri	3/6 Sun	3/8 Tue
MELL SILOSO	018E	3/5 Sat	3/3 Thu	3/3 Thu	3/1 Tue	2/26 Sat	3/11 Fri	3/7 Mon	3/6 Sun	2/27 Sun	2/27 Sun	3/7 Mon	3/11 Fri	3/13 Sun	3/15 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	052E	3/12 Sat	3/10 Thu	3/10 Thu	3/8 Tue	3/5 Sat	3/18 Fri	3/14 Mon	3/13 Sun	3/6 Sun	3/6 Sun	3/14 Mon	3/18 Fri	3/20 Sun	3/22 Tue
MELL SPRINGLEAF	018E	3/19 Sat	3/17 Thu	3/17 Thu	3/15 Tue	3/12 Sat	3/25 Fri	3/21 Mon	3/20 Sun	3/13 Sun	3/13 Sun	3/21 Mon	3/25 Fri	3/27 Sun	3/29 Tue
MELL SILOSO	019E	3/26 Sat	3/24 Thu	3/24 Thu	3/22 Tue	3/19 Sat	4/1 Fri	3/28 Mon	3/27 Sun	3/20 Sun	3/20 Sun	3/28 Mon	4/1 Fri	4/3 Sun	4/5 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	053E	4/2 Sat	3/31 Thu	3/31 Thu	3/29 Tue	3/26 Sat	4/8 Fri	4/4 Mon	4/3 Sun	3/27 Sun	3/27 Sun	4/4 Mon	4/8 Fri	4/10 Sun	4/12 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETD Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA Davao	ETA GenSan	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
MELL SPRINGLEAF	017E	3/12 Sat	3/13 Sun	3/13 Sun	SKIP	3/16 Wed	3/18 Fri	3/20 Sun	SKIP	3/25 Fri	3/26 Sat	3/31 Thu	4/19 Tue	4/3 Sun	3/30 Wed
MELL SILOSO	018E	3/19 Sat	3/20 Sun	3/20 Sun	3/22 Tue	3/23 Wed	3/25 Fri	3/27 Sun	SKIP	4/1 Fri	4/2 Sat	4/7 Thu	4/26 Tue	4/10 Sun	4/6 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	052E	3/26 Sat	3/27 Sun	3/27 Sun	SKIP	3/30 Wed	4/1 Fri	4/3 Sun	SKIP	4/8 Fri	4/9 Sat	4/14 Thu	5/3 Tue	4/17 Sun	4/13 Wed
MELL SPRINGLEAF	018E	4/2 Sat	4/3 Sun	4/3 Sun	4/5 Tue	4/6 Wed	4/8 Fri	4/10 Sun	SKIP	4/15 Fri	4/16 Sat	4/21 Thu	5/10 Tue	4/24 Sun	4/20 Wed
MELL SILOSO	019E	4/9 Sat	4/10 Sun	4/10 Sun	SKIP	4/13 Wed	4/15 Fri	4/17 Sun	SKIP	4/22 Fri	4/23 Sat	4/28 Thu	5/17 Tue	5/1 Sun	4/27 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	053E	4/16 Sat	4/17 Sun	4/17 Sun	4/19 Tue	4/20 Wed	4/22 Fri	4/24 Sun	SKIP	4/29 Fri	4/30 Sat	5/5 Thu	5/24 Tue	5/8 Sun	5/4 Wed

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SSHS sets PTSA meeting

Saipan Southern High School will have a PTSA meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2011, from 6pm to 7pm in the Manta café. ***(PR)***

30th reunion of Class of 1981

This is to inform all graduates classes of 1981, whether you graduated at Marianas High School, Guam, or in the States: There will be class reunion meeting on Saturday, March 26, 2011, at 5:30pm on Beach Road Oleai, middle pavilion north of the Oleai Beach Bar & Grill.

For more information, contact Donald SN Mediola at 237-3791, Merced (Che') Q. DLGuerrero at 237-3625, Diana T. Takai at236-8383, or Mary (Maria) Apatang Babauta-Calilion at256-1094. See you at the meeting. ***(PR)***

House Vice Speaker on *Marianas Agupa*

This Saturday, March 12, 2011, *Marianas Agupa* will feature Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro. The show is from 10am to 10:30am on Magic 100.3 FM. Topic of discussion will be on the role of women in the socio-economic and political development, empowering women in the CNMI, women's perspective on land alienation, submerged lands, and immigration.

The Chamorro talk show program is hosted by Glenn H. Manglona. Featured reports are as follows: World report and program review by former mayor Joseph S. Inos, followed by special report from Rota with correspondent and commentator Thomas D. Mendiola and a report from Tinian by former senator David M. Cing. Simultaneous Internet streaming via www.magic100radio.com will be available. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales LIVE this week

John Gonzales LIVE will take up PSS Accreditation on Wednesday, March 9, 2011, from 7pm to 8pm on KSPN Channel 2. Guests are Lynette L. Villagomez, PSS T&FASEG program coordinator; Vanessa Hocog, principal, Sinapalo Elementary School; Glenn Muna, principal, Oleai Elementary School.

John Gonzales LIVE airs Wednesday and rebroadcasts on Sunday, March 13, and Monday, March 14, all from 7pm to 8 pm. John Gonzales LIVE also rebroadcasts worldwide to the listening audience of BetelNut Radio (www.betelnutradio.com) on March 9, 2011, at 6pm Pacific Standard Time and 9pm Eastern Standard Time (Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 12pm Chamorro Standard Time in the CNMI and Guam).

Viewers can participate by calling 287-4230, texting 285-META (6382), or emailing johngonzales@pticom.com. ***(PR)***

Autism awareness walkathon in the works

With Autism Awareness month coming up, five students plan on reaching out to the community to help spread awareness. A coalition of National Honor Society presidents, known as the National Honor Society Alliance, is planning an "Autism Awareness Walkathon" to take place on April 2, 2011, which is Autism Awareness Day. They are raising funds to help get vital information in the hands of teachers and parents as well as start a student outreach program in the CNMI. Part of the NHS Alliance are Kagman High School's Alexis Hofschneider, Saipan Southern High School's Kaelani Demapan, Marianas High School's Dowen Jocson, Mount Carmel School's Maria Balajadia, and Grace Christian Academy's Lauren Hofschneider. If you have any questions or would like to help, contact Maria Balajadia at 285-9375 or via e-mail at maria.balajadia@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

GUAM GRANT

Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo and Gov. Eddie Calvo look on as Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta signs the Regional Assistance Development Grant, awarding more than $271,000 in federal education grant assistance to GovGuam at the start of the 2011 Plenary Session of the President's Interagency Group on Insular Areas at the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 28, 2011.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed Amendment to the Official Saipan Zoning Map (Rezone)

For MEC LLC

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is seeking your comments on this proposed amendment (rezone) to the Official Saipan Zoning Map. Mr. Christopher A. Torres requests to rezone lot #380-BNew-7-1-R1 and surrounding property, from "Village Residential" to "Village Commercial". Mr. Torres wishes to eventually construct a warehouse and wholesale operation at the intersection of Bakke Street and Tokcha Avenue. This is two blocks east of Beach Road in the village of Susupe.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: Thursday, April 7, 2011
Time: 6:00 pm
Place: Zoning Office conference room, 2nd flr. Joeten Dandan

The proposed map change may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, Dandan or on Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp (publications page). After the public hearing, the Zoning Board will make a decision on whether to approve the change to the Official Zoning Map.

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, April 6, 2011. Send written comments via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact Mr. Douglas Wyatt at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Saipan Zoning Law of 2008.

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Chairman

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Proposed Amendment to the Official Saipan Zoning Map (Rezone)

For Quad L's Company

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is seeking your comments on this proposed amendment (rezone) to the Official Saipan Zoning Map. Mr. Jose R. Lifoifoi requests to rezone lot #023-D89 and surrounding property, from "Village Residential" to "Village Commercial". Mr. Lifoifoi wishes to construct an apartment building at the intersection of Saluda Street and Publiko Drive. This is just east of Chalan Pale Arnold Road in lower Navy Hill.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: Thursday, April 7, 2011
Time: 6:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board conference room, 2nd flr. Joeten Dandan

The proposed map change may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, Dandan or on Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp (publications page). After the public hearing, the Zoning Board will make a decision on whether to approve the change to the Official Zoning Map.

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/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Chairman

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 9, 1999

House will hear out Micronesians on bill

Micronesians who will be impacted by a proposed legislation restricting their stay in the CNMI are welcome to testify at a public hearing scheduled by the House of Representatives next week in efforts to get various views on the plan to change the open migration policy. Local legislators also vowed to forge ahead with the measure despite attempts by the federal government to step in and withhold any CNMI action in light of forthcoming new U.S. regulations on the entry of nationals from the Freely Associated States into its territories. Rep. Melvin Faisao, sponsor of House Bill 11-294 and chair of the Federal and Foreign Relations Committee, said inputs from FAS citizens residing on the island will assist in the drafting of their report to be submitted to the legislative body.

PSS to tap federal money for hiring

The re-authorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of the Federal government opens another funding source for the Public School System to recruit and prepare teachers. The HEA offers the opportunity for the states to reexamine their respective institutions of higher learning and their role in preparing teachers. In a letter to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio, the CNMI was invited to form a local team with members coming from the legislature, a representative from the Governor's Office, the chairman of the legislative education committee and the Commissioner of Education.

Mar. 9, 2000

House junks wider tobacco ban proposal

Citing opposition by government agencies and those in the private sector, the House Committee on Health and Welfare yesterday junked legislation seeking a wider tobacco ban on the island for young people under the age of 21. "[R]aising the age to purchase tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21 would be punishing the wrong persons—it would punish young adults for the [wrongdoing] of a small percentage of retailers who [sell] to youth under the age of 18," it said in a report adopted at yesterday's House session. The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Malua T. Peter, did not get support of most agencies responsible for enforcing existing tobacco laws, including the Department of Public Health and the Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control.

CNMI gets $100K from antitrust settlement pact with Nine West

Consumer Counsel David Lochabay yesterday announced that the CNMI, along with 39 other states and territories, entered into a $34 million settlement with New York shoe manufacturer Nine West Group Inc., resolving allegations of price-fixing. The CNMI is expected to receive up to $100,000 from the settlement and attorneys' fees. The national settlement was filed in U.S. District Court in New York immediately after a lawsuit against Nine West Group was filed in the same court. Although the settlement resolves the lawsuit, it allows the court to retain jurisdiction in overseeing the terms of the agreement. The states alleged Nine West Group entered into illegal agreements with shoe retailers to fix the market price of women's shoes between January 1988 and July 1999.

Mar. 9, 2001

Former lawmaker calls for resumption of 902 talks

Just when everybody thought the issue on federal takeover was dead, former Senator Herman R. De Leon Guerrero wrote to the US Congress urging the resumption of Covenant Section 902 talks. In his letter to Senate Majority Leader Senator Trent Lott, Mr. Guerrero urged the US Congress to give Section 902 of the Covenant a chance to address ripples brought about by what some US lawmakers decry as unfair labor practices and over reliance on nonresident workers by the Commonwealth. Mr. Guerrero also argued that the economic woes besetting the CNMI is not only due to the Asian economic contagion that hit the region four years ago but also because of a continued effort in Washington to legislate policies detrimental to the CNMI economy.

CPA explores new markets

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is mapping out an effective approach to help existing carriers develop new markets, in efforts to revive the islands' slumping tourism industry. The Air Service Committee of the Strategic Economic Development Council recommended that CPA and other CNMI government agencies assist signatory airlines tap new tourism markets to increase NMI-bound traffic. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas mentioned the agency's Airline Incentive Program, which grants airline companies that would serve new destinations significant discounts on airport charges.

Fitial to undergo spinal procedure today

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial is set to see his orthopedic doctor this morning at the UCLA Medical Center where he will undergo an epidural spinal procedure to address the ailments and mobility difficulty he has been experiencing as of late.

The results of today's procedure will determine whether or not the governor will require another spinal surgery in order to remove the remnants of the stenosis that has recurred since his two previous surgeries were performed four years ago at the same medical center.

Dr. Jeffrey Wang, who performed the previous surgeries on Fitial, has indicated that if the spinal procedure today turns out successful, the governor's inflamed and tight lumbar No. 4 and No. 5 will be decompressed and his mobility will see a significant improvement. Dr. Wang is the executive director of the UCLA Comprehensive Spine Center, which integrates different specialties including minimally invasive surgery and advanced non-operative and pain management to comprehensively treat all spinal disorders.

Fitial has also indicated that in the event the results indicate that more corrective measures are required, his absence from the Commonwealth would take longer than anticipated. Nonetheless, he is hopeful for positive results so that he may be able to return home soon. ***(Office of the Governor)***

...and thanks Rathold for aid in securing $28 million grant

While Gov. Benigno R. Fitial was attending the Interagency Group on Insular Areas meeting last week in Washington, D.C., he had the opportunity to meet with Nick Rathold, White House deputy director for Intergovernmental Affairs. Rathold served as co-chair of the IGIA meeting on behalf of Cecilia Muñoz, White House executive director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Rathold was instrumental in assisting Fitial in his efforts to secure the $28 million in federal grant funding that paved the way for the Sandy Beach Homes project through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Through this program, 60 brand new, spacious, and affordable homes will be made available exclusively to eligible low-income tenants in December 2011.

"The LIHTC program is one that is highly technical and complex. Throughout the preparation stages, Mr. Rathold and I spent many hours on teleconference discussing the parameters of such a major undertaking. I am very much grateful to Mr. Rathold's commitment to assisting the Commonwealth in making affordable housing opportunities available for our community," said Fitial.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Nick Rathold, White House deputy director for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The joint efforts involved with getting this program implemented in the CNMI should be viewed as a shining example of positive results that can be achieved when there is a spirit of positive collaboration between the local and national government. ***(Office of the Governor)***

Administration's statement on the passing of Isidro R. Ogarto

Isidro R. Ogarto, head of the Department of Public Health's Health and Vital Statistics Office, passed away Monday morning. Acting governor Eloy S. Inos issued the following statement:

"Governor Fitial and I extend our condolences to Mrs. Lovinia Ogarto, their children, and the entire family of the late Isidro R. Ogarto.

"Sid, as he was fondly called, was instrumental in the development of the Health and Vital Statistics Office at DPH during his time there. He was actively involved with local and federal stakeholders in efforts aimed at developing statistical data to assist policy makers view the trend of particular information such as birth rates, death rates, growth rates by ethnicity, and casualty of death. Mr. Ogarto's office was also charged with the issuance of certified copies of certificates or records, search of files or records when no copy is made, or for copies of information provided for research, statistical or administrative purposes.

"As I understand it, Sid and his colleagues had already reached the tailend of a monumental undertaking that would revolutionize the automation of critical records to provide users with technological access to pertinent data.

"Mr. Ogarto's untimely passing is a deep loss for his colleagues and the Commonwealth. He will be missed." ***(Office of the Governor)***

Managaha gets green flag

The Division of Environmental Quality analyzed water samples collected from Managaha's recreational beaches and dock this week as part of the regularly scheduled sampling. None of the samples collected contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality standards. DEQ therefore assigns a green flag to Managaha.

The division analyzed a total of 11 samples from Managaha this week.

DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter. ***(DEQ)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP11-OHS-051

SUBMISSION: APRIL 18, 2011 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEM FOR THE CNMI'S GUMA HUSTISIA (COURTHOUSE)"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A MANDATORY SITE VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE ON **MARCH 28, 2011 AT 9:30 A.M.** AT THE GUMA HUSTISIA (COURTHOUSE). **FAILURE TO ATTEND THE MANDATORY SITE VISIT SHALL RESULT IN THE DISQUALIFICATION OF PROSPECTIVE OFFEROR.**

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ MARVIN K. SEMAN
ACTING SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN, MP 96950-1055 • Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

INVITATION FOR BID
CPA-IFB-11-01
"SALE OF CPA VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT"

The location of the vehicles and equipment is at the Saipan International Airport.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is soliciting competitive sealed bids from individuals or firms interested in buying CPA vehicles and equipment. The list of vehicles and equipment will be available for pick up at the Saipan International Airport, administration office on the 2nd floor of the arrival terminal starting February 17, 2011 during regular working hours. The closing date of this bid is March 11, 2011 at 2:00 pm. All bids must be in a sealed enveloped marked CPA-IFB-11-01.

The individual or firm submitting the highest bid for any or all the vehicles or equipment on the list must make full payment within five (5) working days from the date of notification. Payment must be made to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. All vehicles and equipment are sold "AS IS" and "WHERE IS" and WITHOUT WARRANTY. All sold properties must be removed from CPA property within 72 hours from the date of payment. CPA will not be responsible for said property after the specified timeframe.

All items listed may be viewed at the location indicated on the listing. Inquiries may be directed to the Operations Supervisor, Mr. John Tudela, at telephone number 237-6500.

/S/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

Date: 02/16/2011

F. MATTHEW SMITH
LAW OFFICE OF F. MATTHEW SMITH, LLC
2ND Floor, MIC Building, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero
P.O. Box 501127, San Jose Village, Saipan, MP 96950-1127
Telephone Nos.: (670) 234-7455 / 7427
Facsimile No.: (670) 234-7256

Attorney for Petitioner.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ANTONIA VILLAGOMEZ TAITANO, Deceased.	Civil Action No. 11-0065 NOTICE OF HEARING/ NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Date: May 24, 2011
Time: 1:30pm
Honorable Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja

TO: THE HEIRS, GENERAL PUBLIC AND CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT OR OF HIS ESTATE

Notice is hereby given that the Petitioner, Shiela Ann T. Herwin, has filed a Petition for Letters of Administration in the above-entitled Estate proceeding pursuant to Rule 15, Com. R. Prob.

A hearing on the petition will be conducted by the Court on **May 24, 2011** at **1:30 pm** in Courtroom 202, Superior Court. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

Pursuant to Rule 21, Com. R. Prob., notice is hereby given to all creditors of the Decedent of his Estate that they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of the publication of this notice. A copy of the claim of any creditor should be sent to F. Matthew Smith at the above indicated address.

Reference is hereby made to the petition for further particulars.

Dated this 3rd day of March, 2011.

/s/DEPUTY CLERK OF COURT

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC.
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF SAIPAN,	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 02-0409**
Plaintiff	:	
-v-	:	
MARTIN DLG. SAN NICOLAS,	:	
Defendants	:	

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on (2), I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set for the hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: A leasehold estate in 006 T 106, situated in Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 926 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 006 T 04, the original of which was recorded September 28, 1983, as Document No. 18301, at the Land Registry, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, March 18, 2011, at the hour of 11:00 a.m., at the Courthouse in Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of sale.

Dated this 10th day of FEBRUARY. 2011.

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE
Auctioneer

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST, **Plaintiff,** **vs.** **DEWAYNE I. SABLAN and KATHERINE B. VILLANUEVA,** **Defendants.**	**Civil Action No. 06-0329 CV** **NOTICE OF HEARING ON MOTION FOR AN ORDER OF JUDICIAL SALE OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY** **Date: April 5, 2011** **Time: 9:00am** **Judge: R. Manglona**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the **5th day of April 2011**, at **9:00am**, hearing will be held before the **Honorable Manglona** on Plaintiff's Motion For an Order of Judicial Sale of Mortgaged Property in the above-styled matter, at the Superior Court for the CNMI, Guma Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 22nd day of February, 2011.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC.
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

JAVILI GENERAL PARTNERSHIP,	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0282**
Plaintiff	:	
-v-	:	
GUANG L. JIN,	:	
Defendants.	:	

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty (20) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of our answer to the LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

/s/ Clerk of Court

Dated this 16th day of FEBRUARY. 2011.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR JANITORIAL SERVIES
RFP #11-02

SERVICES REQUIRED

The Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT), a public trust of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands requests proposals from interested firms to provide janitorial services for MPLT office located on 1313 Anatahan Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Provide weekly general janitorial services for the MPLT office comprising of approximately 1,600 sq ft. Specifications can be picked up at the MPLT office or access at the MPLT website.

PACKAGES & SUBMITTAL DATE

Please submit letter of interest to include monthly rate to the attention of **Barbara Reyes,** Office Manager, Marianas Public Land Trust P.O. Box 501089, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 4:00 P.M., Thursday, March 17, 2011.

Interested firms are welcome to conduct a survey of the site.

This public notice is also available on our website at www.mplt.gov.mp. If there are any questions relative to this notice, interested parties are asked to contact Ms. Barbara Reyes during the hours stated above.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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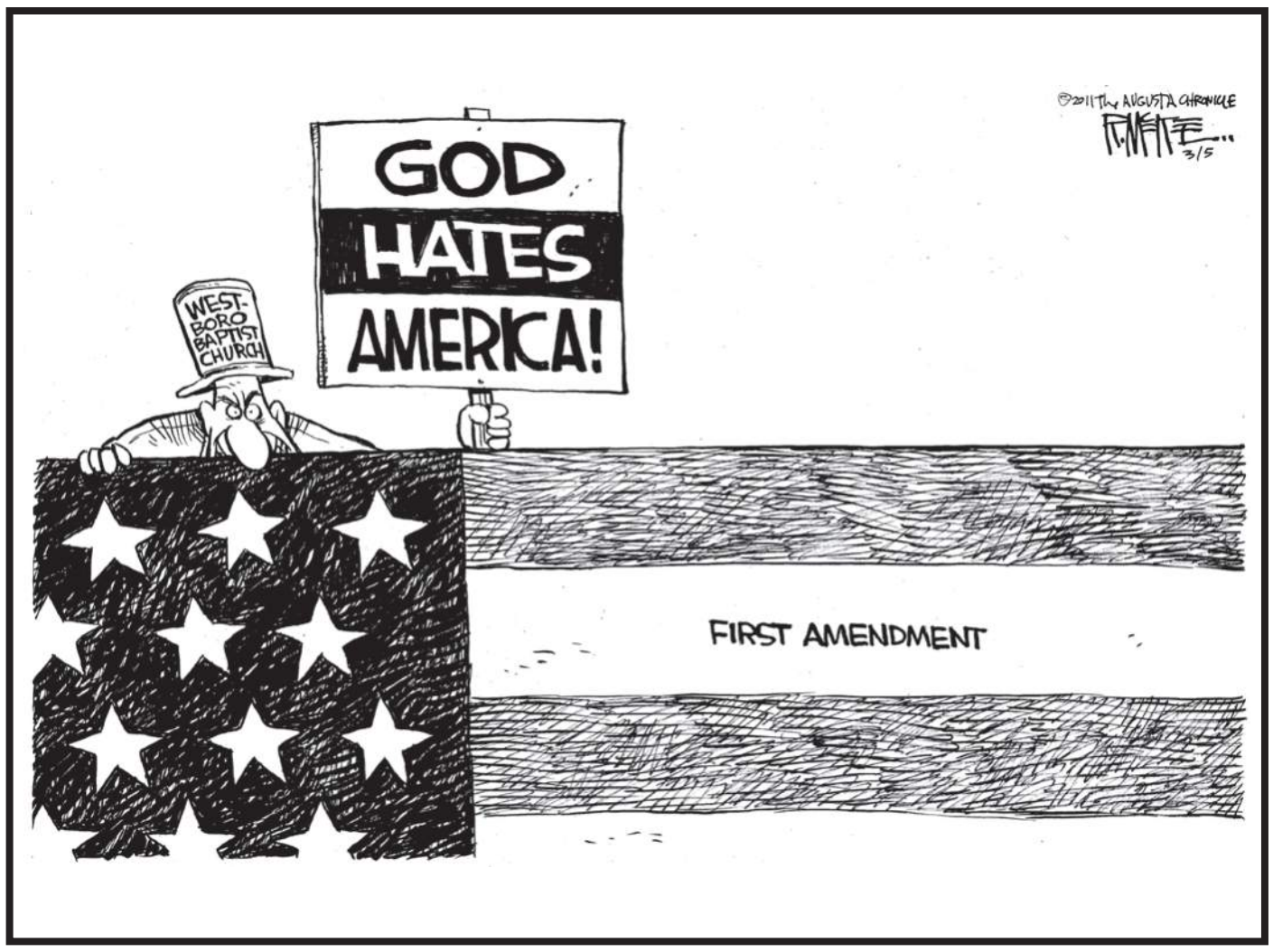


EDITORIAL

The dark world of search engine manipulation

When it comes to directing people's attention, there has never been anything as powerful as today's vast online search engines, and when it comes to search engines, nobody can touch Google, whose sites handle an estimated 88 billion queries a month, roughly two-thirds the world total.

Users don't have any idea how Google decides the order in which it presents search results, and that ranking is the most consequential thing Google does. That's because search engines may look far and wide, but their users do not. If your company doesn't show up at or near the top of Google's results, it's invisible.

A survey last May by the online advertising network Chitika found that the No. 1 search result drew over one-third of all traffic the results generated _ twice as much as No. 2, three times the traffic of No. 3. Being on the first page of rankings was critical. Even No. 10, at the bottom of page 1, drew nearly two and a half times the traffic of No. 11, at the top of the second page.

So any retailer that wants to reach customers online cares intensely about its rankings, and is eager for ploys to ensure prominence. Hence the business of SEO _ search engine optimization. SEO is focused on figuring out Google's rankings and giving Google what it's looking for. Which is what? Only Google knows, and its search methodology is about as widely shared as the formula for Coke.

What is known is that Google puts great weight not just on traffic flows, but on how well regarded a particular site is, and tries to measure that regard by calculating the number, and to some extent, the quality of other sites that link to it. Google likes to think it is reflecting some prevailing judgment of a site's value.

But that judgment can be counterfeited. One extraordinary instance, uncovered recently by The New York Times, involved JC Penney, the venerable Main Street retailer. Apparently, for months Penney was the top-ranked site if you searched for terms as disparate as "skinny jeans," "home decor," "area rugs," "dresses," and "table cloths." Penney even pulled more traffic for "Samsonite carry on luggage" than Samsonite's own site.

How come? Penney's success was traced to an SEO consultant who had, essentially, contracted with more than 2,000 web pages that had no discernible purpose apart from linking to sites like Penney's _ for pay. Penney's fortunes rose thanks to this virtual ballot-stuffing.

In a second case, The Wall Street Journal reported that retailer Overstock.com had been caught offering discounts to college students and faculty for linking to Overstock from various search terms, among them "gift baskets" and "bunk beds." Overstock's rankings soared because the links came from sites with the ".edu" suffix reserved for schools. Google apparently assigns great weight to .edu sites, since they rarely link to commercial entities and their endorsements are thought to be especially credible.

See DARK on Next Page

North Korea: A nation in the dark

By LAURA LING
Los Angeles Times

Laura Ling is host of the documentary series "E! Investigates." She is the coauthor of Somewhere Inside: One Sister's Captivity in North Korea and the Other's Fight to Bring Her Home. *She wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

Around the world, authoritarian regimes have tried to keep their citizens from hearing news of the protests raging throughout the Middle East and in their own countries. Some have tried shutting down cellphone and Internet service, but that has only sparked new flames of anger and discontent.

Even the Chinese government, which has unleashed the most sophisticated Internet blocking system in the world, can't contain all the information and chatter on countless websites, social networks and blogs.

As far back as 2006, when I was in Beijing on assignment for Current TV, people there were surreptitiously bypassing what's become known as the great firewall of China. Using my laptop in my hotel room, I first tried unsuccessfully to access various banned sites dedicated to human rights issues. But after I installed an unauthorized piece of software called Ultrareach, used by many Chinese to get around government blocks, I was immediately able to open the forbidden websites.

But there is one country that has actually managed to keep the vast majority of its population in the dark: North Korea. Unlike its neighbor China, which has more than 450 million Internet users, the Internet in North Korea is banned for the average citizen. There's no need for the government to block threatening websites, because most North Koreans have never used a computer, let alone understand what a URL is.

In March 2009, while working on a story along the China-North Korean border, I was taken captive by North Korean soldiers and held inside that isolated country for nearly five months. Though I was confined to a room with two guards watching over me at all times, I was able to get an interesting glimpse of the country's propaganda machine.

In the guards' area, a television would blare black-and-white films depicting evil South Korean and American soldiers being beaten back by the North's heroic forces. Elaborate rallies were broadcast with people shouting nationalistic slogans as soldiers marched in unison. And there was frequent coverage of the "Dear Leader," Kim Jong Il, presiding over the opening of factories or schools.

To this day, I can conjure up the tune to North Korea's national anthem, because every evening at 5, when television broadcasts began airing, I was subjected to the sounds of the men's military choir patriotically belting out the lyrics of the communist revolutionary anthem. Every Sunday night, a segment dedicated to international news would feature negative stories about the United States or natural disasters in other countries. It seemed that one responsibility of the government censors was to make the rest of the world appear worse off than North Korea.

Fortunately, I was allowed to receive letters from family and friends, which kept me somewhat connected to what was happening in the outside world. My husband, Iain, scanned pages and photos from newspapers and magazines. In excerpts he sent from the Economist, I learned that hundreds of thousands of Iranians had taken to the streets of Tehran in June 2009 to protest President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election.

On North Korean television, the picture of events taking place in Iran was very different. North Koreans saw only images of jubilant Iranians celebrating Ahmadinejad's victory. I tried to tell my guard that there was another reality from the one being presented on TV. In broken English, she said she didn't understand. It truly seemed that she couldn't comprehend the idea of a people rising up against their leadership and demanding change.

Despite having a near-total lockdown on information that gets transmitted to its population, Kim's totalitarian regime has to be finding it harder and harder to keep the world at bay. North Korea shares borders with two of the most wired countries in the world, and information is seeping in from both sides.

A black market exists in the country, from which North Koreans purchase DVDs of Chinese dramas and pornography. News about the outside world also enters the North via an underground network that allows people to call relatives in China or South Korea using contraband cellphones.

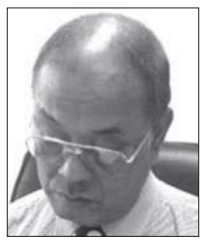
Late last month, the South Korean military began dropping leaflets in North Korea about the democracy protests in Egypt, and activists have vowed to continue the propaganda campaign despite the North's threats of military retaliation.

But I question whether the North Korean people would even know what to do with knowledge of protests in the Arab world. Theirs is one of the most isolated societies on the planet, and both absolute reverence for and total fear of Kim run deep. Although there have been recent reports of small protests in towns close to the Chinese border, with groups demanding food and electricity, organization on a mass scale seems unlikely.

When I think about the reaction of an impoverished North Korean farmer getting a strange leaflet dropped by a balloon in the sky telling him wild tales of an insurrection in a far-off land, I'm reminded of my guard who was dumbfounded by the idea of freedom. It's a concept that the majority of North Koreans are likely to find impossible to understand.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Casino: Let governance decide



By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

DelRosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's *Opinion Section.*

Former Speaker Diego Benavente is right in saying that the final disposition of the casino measure must come from governance. Our people have shot down this measure twice. They are not ready to shoulder the costly beast of the negative social effects of casino gambling here. We've seen how poker has ruined families and we're not ready to see more families destroyed by adding fuel to fire.

Any responsible lawmaker who has taken an oath to do what's right would spend reasonable time researching this issue thoroughly. For instance, why did casinos on Tinian and Rota fail? Simple: There isn't a *local* market for it. In brief, the local population can't support such an industry. Therefore, it turns into an unsustainable industry. Saipan is similarly situated. Why repeat failed history?

Why did Macau casinos succeed? It sits next to nearly two billion people where 100,000 of them become multi-millionaires every year. With disposable income, they head to casinos for entertainment and pleasure. The NMI just doesn't have this group of filthy rich folks to dump their disposable income in casino joints.

Finally, the two most powerful casino owners from Las Vegas and Macau are ready to move into Japan, saying it is a "ripe" market. Reason? Japan has 2.6 million millionaires who can afford to dump some of their money for entertainment and pleasure. The greater question is: What becomes of Saipan casinos upon construction and completion of Japanese casinos? More of our assumed players would prefer staying home. Be that as it may, let governance decide on this matter. After all, our form of government leaves the authority to decide in the hands of governance, like it or not.

Fatal Keynesian concept

The steadily sinking local economy is stuck in the quicksand of its generous pension program. It is further aggravated by habitual unbridled spending of money we don't have in the coffers. It must have been dead bait in the low lands of Marianas politics where land sharks have reduced it to bankruptcy.

And the land sharks are still at it. They're now pushing for a bond obligation of sort to borrow some $200 million to retire the current deficit. Indeed, economist Maynard Keynes turned the concept of borrowing money to cover government operations the accepted paradigm. He argues that it permits the country to rebound as it uses loans to provide temporary shelter.

But this concept has been ruled unfit for deficit reduction purposes. It piles into a larger mountain of debt, to the extent where the federal government now has more debt than what it generates. How do we resolve this mess? Firstly, it's good to shelve the bond obligation loan permanently. Secondly, get into real time reduction of all non-essential expenses across the board.

The NMI might not have much revenue at the end of 10 years. But it will also not have debts in the millions owed to vendors. It reminds me of the joke where a friend was asked to pay his debt. Said he, "How can I pay you if you don't loan me some more money?" Call it deficit spending on deficit spending, a vicious cycle. A` Saina!

Contributing to the deepening economic crisis is the obvious lack of a fully thought out plan prepared by the administration and sanctioned by the Legislature for implementation. Thus the persistent disorientation as leadership attempts to navigate the treacherous seas of negligence over the last three decades. As a result, we defer to ad hoc planning at the eleventh hour. Do you still want to blame Uncle Sam for our inadequacies?

Historic official pallbearers

The Legislature has adopted a resolution urging the U.S. Congress to grant foreigners FAS status, hoping too that these folks are excluded from local elections. Why can't they be granted the entire nine yards?

It should be understood that the status of FASayers (Republics of the Marshalls, Belau and Federated States of Micronesia) was approved under bilateral agreements between FAS states and the federal government.

It stands to reason that the resolution should have followed appropriate protocol by urging the Republic of the Philippines and the U.S. to treat this matter via bilateral agreement. This is the most appropriate paradigm on an issue that is out of our league.

The other anomaly is the presentation of the resolution to the U.S. Congress. Senators Paul Manglona, Jude Hofschneider and Ralph Torres want an internment of the measure. And the trio is guarding its role as the highest paid pallbearers between here and D.C. Perhaps it really takes three people to haul legal size papers to D.C. that could have been sent via DHL in a secured U.S. Post Office box.

Obviously, they don't trust Kilili. I'm sure Kilili is smiling ear-to-ear to be relegated to such a dignified post, an administrative assistant. Don't the three pallbearers know that Kilili is a member of the 112th U.S. Congress?

And they've forgotten that the CNMI is broke, gasping for air in the sea of red ink or bankruptcy. It's your tax dollars slated for this purpose. If you disagree, call the Legislature and register your opposition. Eh, whatever happened to common sense?

■ ■ ■ ■

The financial travails here isn't so much the degeneration of revenues as much as the obvious lack of resolve to kill the beastly habit of spending beyond our means. The hardest task in instituting cuts is: Who among relatives would be fired first this year? This would prompt the usual political pirouette as the Capital Hill boys ruminate, "I heard nothing, saw nothing, don't know anything." If you can't impose policing your colleagues for lubricity then there's nothing else left except for involuntary hiccups. And they took an oath to do what's right?

■ ■ ■ ■

So what's so scary about the metaphorical magma? When it finally descends and we witness, first hand, the apocalyptic devastation right in our presence. Plans for economic recovery becomes less likely as more businesses put up shutters. H-Mark and Saipan Kanko have started dismantling to head home or elsewhere. Gee! Stunning that politicians have promised a "no shutdown" of government operations. Showdown perhaps?

Letters to the Editor

Help our children, governor!

"Help, governor!" is the cry of many students and parents waiting for their SHEFA checks. I know that many students and parents are in desperate need of these funds, self included, and it is exceptionally challenging with two girls in college on the mainland and depending on these scholarship funds. Many parents have been forced to take out loans, self included, because of the long delay in payments and now the payments haven't been completed for the last semester and a new semester has started, which means the students are now two checks behind. I see a familiar trend in how our government fulfills its obligation to our children and this has me deeply concerned and I'm not alone.

Students and parents are depending on the government to live up to its obligation but now even our children are being neglected. I know it is difficult for everyone to be depending on the SHEFA funds and it is even more challenging for students on the mainland, as they have to account for housing, food, utilities and all the additional expenses that come with living as a renter on the mainland. The governor has a fiduciary obligation to take care of our most precious resource (our children) when it comes to these scholarships but instead of taking care of them like a father should, he is allowing the payments to get farther and farther behind.

If the government is going to be uncertain or delinguent in paying the scholarships, they should adjust the program accordingly but not in the middle of the school year. I could even understand the government reducing the scholarships in the future under these economic conditions but not now. I refuse to understand and accept any rationale for not taking care of our children, especially those in the mainland who have literally gone out on a limb, depending on these funds for their education. The government should be making sure our children don't have to worry about their money for school. Parents sacrifice everyday for their child's education and there won't be one reasonable complaint if the government did the same to make sure the SHEFA funds get there on time.

The government has placed a lot of students and parents in some very precarious and extremely difficult situations. The recent news story also confirms that some students will not be able to register because their checks never came for the last semester and they didn't have the money to offset cost. Our government has left our children literally stranded in the mainland and I will let the readers form their own opinion about this because they won't print what I would like to say.

The students in the mainland literally represent the future for local leaders, professionals, and educated politicians. If we don't take care of them it should be obvious our fate will remain in the hands of the alien workforce! These students represent the *most* important investment we can make in our social, economic and political future!

If ever there was a time for the governor to be a true "father figure" of the CNMI, it should be now—by taking care of our children and preserving the integrity of our future leaders and professionals. It should also be noted that when I last did the numbers a few years ago the return rate of students receiving scholarships was 29 percent, meaning 71 percent of students were not returning. So students need to know that I'm not just complaining for them to get help but for the welfare of the entire Commonwealth. Students who receive these scholarships have a very serious ethical and even legal obligation to return to the CNMI and make a contribution to our workforce, which is why you were given the scholarship. Students, we who will one day be the old are depending on you so don't let us down! One people one direction for taking care of our children and our children taking care of us in the future—it is that simple!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

Let the people decide on casino bill

Rep. Diego Benavente is darn right about letting the people decide on the casino bill. I am proud to say that Rep. Benavente is probably the most vocal representative who always stands up for the CNMI people. Where are the others? Remember, that the people of CNMI elected you to represent them and please have the courtesy to allow us, the voters of CNMI, to decide on this casino bill. It is very dangerous to let the House pass the casino bill without first letting the voters decide. We all know that some of our congressmen and senators probably have their own agenda and personal interest in this bill, especially those who are pushing to pass the bill in the House without the voters' representation. I wonder if there are any payoffs to those individuals who are really pushing the casino bill in the House.

Jack Muña
Koblerville, Saipan

DARK

From Page 10

Google's response in both instances was terrible and swift. It took undisclosed measures that, in Penney's case, led to its average position for 59 search terms plummeting from 1.3 to 52 within two weeks. Overstock had been at or near the top for dozens of keywords, but within days had plummeted to the fifth or six page of results, the functional equivalent of vanishing.

The tales are disturbing on several counts.

■ First, the vulnerability of the rankings to manipulation. With 300 million domain names to police, Google is preposterously outgunned.

■ Second, the quiet, unchallengeable ferocity of the response. You don't have to support fraud to agree with the Times reader who posted: "Was anyone else spooked by Google virtually eliminating a company from existence by removing it entirely from search results?"

■ Third, the non-transparency of the whole search business. What could be more opaque? The retailers' actions certainly seem wrong, but says who? If the principles guiding search shape public awareness in sweeping ways, shouldn't we know what they are? Besides, Google itself routinely features its own spinoffs _ Google Product Search, Google News and YouTube _ high up on its results. Is that OK? Why do I get three "Google Maps" links on page 1 when I type in "driving directions?"

Now Google is incorporating recommendations from your social media "friends" to personalize the search results you get. Who authorized Google to help itself to that information? And precisely how will your so-called friends' opinions alter the rankings you see?

Google is an extraordinary company, and its credo of "do no harm" is impressive. But it's difficult to think of another private, profit-seeking entity that has ever exercised such vast power over what the world thinks about and pays attention to. That's a profoundly public function, and with it comes an obligation of accountability that Google has so far bungled.

Edward Wasserman is Knight professor of journalism ethics at Washington and Lee University. He wrote this column for The Miami Herald. *Readers may write to him at:* The Miami Herald, *1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla. 33132; website: www.edwardwasserman.com.*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

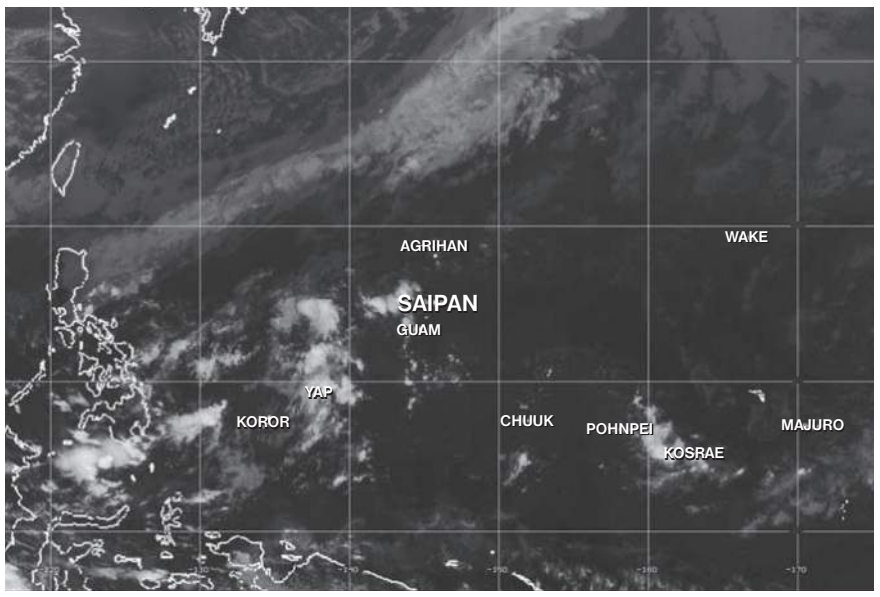
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼76
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼76
Pohnpei	Showers	▲87	▼75
Kosrae	Rain	▲87	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲70	▼62
Beijing	Sunny	▲61	▼30
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲68	▼61
Honolulu	Showers	▲81	▼71
London	Partly Cloudy	▲51	▼41
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲75	▼52
Manila	Thundershowers	▲84	▼74
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲69	▼57
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼68
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼39
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲48	▼36
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼37
Pusan	Sunny	▲48	▼34
Rome	Sunny	▲57	▼38
Salem	Rain	▲60	▼49
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲67	▼52
Seoul	Sunny	▲44	▼27
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲49	▼36
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲49	▼47

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2011
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front well northwest of the CNMI extends southwestward from 25N145E to beyond 130E at 19N. Patchy clouds and rain are found along and northwest of the front. A surface trough near Yap extends northward from 3N137E to 16N136E. Another trough west of the Marianas extends northeastward from 14N141E to 18N145E. Scattered showers are found across Yap and near Guam between 7N and 16N from 136E to 140E and within an area bounded by a line from 15N141E to 13N144E to 17N144E back to 15N141E. A surface trough near Pohnpei and Kosrae extends northwestward from 4N162E to 8N159E. Scattered showers are found within 100 miles of the trough. Trade-wind convergence is producing widely scattered showers south of Majuro within an area bounded by a line from 7N176E to 4N167E to 1N168E to 4N177E back to 7N176E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:08 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
9:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
4:41 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
10:56 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:30 AM	6:26 PM
Thursday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:27 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:27 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:49 AM	9:51 PM
Thursday	9:31 AM	10:42 PM
Friday	10:16 AM	11:35 PM
Saturday	11:06 AM	
Sunday	11:59 AM	12:28 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM

CO9317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
CO9313	7:55am	8:45am	3, 6
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
CO9601	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
CO9603	3:05pm	3:55pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
CO9605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:10am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:40am	9:15am	1, 3, ,4, 5, 6
DL297	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via KIX

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA988	3:15am	6:55am	1, 5 Dec 13, 17, 20, 24 & 27 only

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
CO9317/891	4:25am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL285/173	6:40am	10:15pm	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
CO9313/933	7:55am	9:25pm	3 via GUM
CO9313/893	7:55am	11:00pm	3 via GUM-Palau
CO9603/933	3:05pm	9:25pm	5 via GUM
CO9603/893	3:05pm	11:00pm	5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 ICN
OZ604/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7
CO9605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
CO9599/PR111	9:30pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
CO9603/909	3:05pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:35pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM-SAIPAN

CO9316	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
CO9596	6:35am	7:25am	3, 6
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
CO9600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
CO9602	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily
DL286	7:45pm	12:20am+1	2, 3, ,4 ,5, 7
DL288	8:00pm	12:30am+1	Daily

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ120	9:50am	2:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:10pm	2:20am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA987	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7 Dec 12, 16, 19, 23 & 26 only

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ716/603	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
DL172/286	8:05am	12:20am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
CO890/9606	10:55am	8:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/CO9596	10:15pm	7:25am+1	6 via GUM
PR110/CO9596	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 4, 7 via GUM
CO892/9596	10:25pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM-Palau
CO892/9596	10:25pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM-Palau
CO934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 7 via GUM
CO934/9596	11:25pm	7:50am+1	4 via GUM
CO934/9596	11:59pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM
CO934/9596	11:59pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
CO910/9596	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; CA: Air China
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40	11:50	Daily
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Island Snapshots

CULTURE WARRIORS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A student purchases a snack item from NMC's Chamorro Cultural Club, which recently held a bake sale on the NMC campus. The club is raising funds to assist them in creating activities aimed at promoting, celebrating, and preserving the Chamorro culture for the islands' future generations.

COCONUT HUSKERS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of NMC's Chamorro Cultural Club pose for a group picture after husking coconuts for a fundraising activity. The club aims to promote and preserve the Chamorro culture for the CNMI's younger generation.

DOING THEIR SHARE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Three young members of the Saipan Awaodori Team pick up trash along Beach Road during PDM Promoters Inc.'s monthly cleanup on Sunday.

RED CROSS TRAINING CLARISSA V. DAVID

A participant receives his Red Cross certification after completing the Super CPR Saturday training on March 5, 2011, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

FUTURE CHEF CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A student who joined the Koblerville Elementary School's Recipe Contest shows off her "creation" during the competition on campus on Feb. 18, 2011.

CONGRATULATIONS! CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Greetings go out to our parents Rex and Getty Ben! Congratulations on your wedding on March 4, 2011 and belated happy 11th anniversary. We love you both. May God bless you! Coming from Royce, Ran, and Roxanne Ben.

WINNERS' LIST CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Winners of the Koblerville Elementary School science quiz bee, STEM fair, and recipe contest receive their medals and certificates during the awarding rites Monday last week, Feb. 28, 2011.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy, happy birthday going out to the one and only Queen Bhy! Wishing you all the best and happiness life has to offer. May God shower you with blessings, good health, and many more birthdays to come! Lots of love from your family & friends!

Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Subways outnumber McDonald's worldwide

Subway now has more restaurants worldwide than McDonald's. The sandwich chain surpassed the world's largest hamburger chain in terms of number of stores in the U.S. in 2002 and now it has taken the global lead. Subway had 33,749 restaurants worldwide at the end of last year, according to the company. McDonald's Corp. had 32,737, according a regulatory filing. McDonald's, however, remains the revenue champion. The company reported $24 billion in revenue for its last fiscal year. Subway generated roughly $15.2 billion, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal. Subway is a privately held company that does not publicly disclose its financial performance.

Car-buying fuels increase in consumer borrowing

WASHINGTON (AP)—Consumers borrowed more in January to purchase new cars but were once again frugal with their credit cards, offering a mixed sign of their confidence in the economy. Borrowing rose 2.5 percent, or by $5 billion, the Federal Reserve said Monday. It was the fourth consecutive monthly gain and it increased total consumer debt to $2.41 trillion. Strong car sales drove the increase. The category that includes auto loans rose 6.9 percent.

Judge weighs rival plans in Trib bankruptcy

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—Attorneys for Tribune Co. and a rival group of creditors argued the merits of their competing reorganization plans for the media conglomerate Monday before a Delaware bankruptcy judge who must decide whether either one passes muster. Judge Kevin Carey heard opening arguments in a scheduled two-week hearing that could determine the fate of Tribune, which sought bankruptcy protection less than a year after an $8.2 billion leveraged buyout that left it with unsustainable debt. Tribune, which owns the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, other newspapers and several radio and TV stations, filed for bankruptcy protection in December 2008. The company faced a decline in advertising revenue and a debt burden of more than $12 billion from the buyout engineered by billionaire developer Sam Zell.

Gas prices are about more than just oil

By JONATHAN FAHEY
AP ENERGY WRITER

When Jay Ricker, owner of the BP gas station off Interstate 70 in Plainfield, Ind., set the price of unleaded gasoline at $3.44 per gallon on Monday of last week, it was 4 cents higher than the Friday before.

That alone might have been irritating to drivers paying the highest gas prices in more than two years. It was even more so because it happened on a day when the price of crude oil, which is used to make gasoline, fell almost $1 a barrel.

"It's up 20 cents one day, down 10 cents the next day," says Oscar Elmore, a courier who was filling up his Ford Taurus at a RaceTrac service station in Dallas recently. "It sounds kinda fishy to me."

Gas prices rise when oil prices rise, and fall when oil prices fall—except when they don't. What you pay at your gas station depends on an array of factors, from what happens on an exchange in New York to what the competition is charging.

This can rankle drivers, especially these days. Gas reached a national average of $3.51 a gallon on Monday. That's up 14 cents, or 4 percent, over the past week. The week before, the average rose 20 cents, the steepest increase since September 2008.

A year ago, the price was $2.75. The average is the highest it's ever been this time of year, and analysts expect it to climb higher in the coming weeks.

Unlike an iPhone or a pair of jeans or a Big Mac, oil and gas are commodities, and their prices can change every second at the New York Mercantile Exchange and other trading hubs. Those far-off changes affect the cost of the next day's commute.

Sellers of commodities, like gas station owners and refineries, price their product based not on what it costs to produce it, but on what it costs to replace it. Stations like the Plainfield BP, which gets shipments of gas several times a week, must constantly adjust their prices to keep up with the changing costs of their shipments.

Oil is the biggest factor in gas prices. It accounts for 50 to 70 percent of the cost. Recent upheaval in the Middle East and strong demand for oil around the world have pushed oil prices over $100 a barrel for only the second time in history. But the price of a gallon of gas at the pump rises—and, yes, falls—for a number of other reasons.

Oil prices can be moved by geopolitics, the value of the dollar, extreme weather or Chinese demand. Gas prices can be moved by oil prices, refinery problems or even weather that might keep drivers at home.

In the next few weeks, gas prices are expected to rise as refiners switch to a more expensive blend of gasoline designed to help protect against evaporation during the warmer summer months.

"We have to pay whatever the market says we do. It's an instantaneous world," says Joe Petrowski, CEO of Gulf Oil, a big gasoline wholesaler.

Whether the gas at the Plainfield BP was made from a barrel of oil pumped a month ago 1,000 miles away in Williston, N.D., or three months ago and 7,000 miles away in Kuwait, its price is set by buyers and sellers in New York hours before Ricker buys it.

There's no way to know exactly where the oil used to make the gasoline sold at the Plainfield BP came from, or even where the gas was refined. Oils from many sources are mixed together on their way to a refinery, and gasolines from many refineries are mixed together on their way to a fuel terminal, where gas is stored before trucks take it to gas stations.

AP
A motorist finishes pumping gas to his car at an Arco station in Federal Way, Wash. on Monday, March 7, 2011.

Oil settles above $105 a barrel, gas above $3.50

NEW YORK (AP)—Oil prices continued to set new post-recession highs Monday as forces loyal to Moammar Gadhafi pounded rebels near a key oil port in Libya. It's unclear how long the country's oil exports will be cut off, and traders prepared for a worst-case scenario in which world supplies would be under pressure for months.

Benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude for April delivery gained $1.02 to settle at $105.44 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The price almost hit $107 per barrel earlier in electronic trading, the highest level since Sept. 26, 2008.

In London, Brent crude fell 93 cents to settle at $115.04 per barrel.

The rise in oil is driving U.S. gasoline prices to levels that weren't expected for at least another month. Pump prices have jumped an average of 39 cents per gallon since the Libyan uprising began in mid-February, forcing motorists to pay an additional $146 million per day for the same amount of fuel. The national average hit $3.509 per gallon on Monday, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service.

Libya, which sits on the largest oil reserves in Africa, has been engulfed in a four-week rebellion as militants try to oust Gadhafi after 41 years in power. Officials in the country say oil fields continue to operate, but daily exports of 1.5 million barrels could be cut off for some time.

On Monday, Libyan warplanes launched more airstrikes on rebel positions around the Ras Lanouf oil port as forces loyal to Gadhafi tried to keep rebels from advancing on his stronghold in the capital, Tripoli.

OPEC has ramped up production to make up for the loss of Libyan crude. The Financial Times reported Monday that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Nigera are planning to put another 1 million barrels per day on the market.

Also, the Obama administration is evaluating whether to tap U.S. strategic oil reserves to slow the rising price of oil. A White House spokesman said officials will base that decision on a variety of factors, including the flow of oil to the U.S.

The government started to stockpile oil after the 1973 Arab embargo. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve, located in massive underground salt deposits in Texas and Louisiana, currently holds 727 million barrels of oil—enough to supply the nation for 37 days.

United cuts 2011 growth and Southwest raises fares

DALLAS (AP)—United Continental Holdings Inc., the world's biggest airline company, scrapped its 2011 growth plans on Monday and said it will cut unprofitable routes because of rising fuel prices.

The airline also said it may remove less fuel-efficient planes from its fleet.

United said the amount of flying it does this year will remain about the same as last year. It had previously planned to grow as much as 2 percent.

Fuel has become the largest single expense for most airlines. Flying less is one way they can offset it. Raising fares is another—and they've been doing that aggressively.

Over the weekend Southwest Airlines Co. joined a $10 increase started by other airlines on many domestic round-trip fares. Southwest's increase may have ensured success for a price hike by major airlines that seemed to be faltering. Southwest carries more U.S. passengers than any airline and wields great influence over prices.

It's the sixth time airlines have raised fares already this year. FareCompare.com CEO Rick Seaney says leisure travelers may now have to pay $260 for a ticket that cost $200 back on Jan. 1.

The airlines say they need the money.

"Fuel prices are up every week and the fare increases aren't keeping pace with fuel cost increases," Southwest CEO Gary C. Kelly told The Associated Press.

Kelly said Southwest is on pace to spend $1.3 billion more on fuel this year than last year. That's nearly triple the airline's $459 million net income for 2010, or about $15 per customer.

Kelly doesn't think higher fares are driving away customers. Southwest reported Monday that February traffic, measured in miles flown by paying passengers, jumped 13 percent from the same month last year. However, United Continental traffic fell 1.1 percent for the month.

Jet fuel prices have risen more than 50 percent in the past year to more than $3 a gallon, although most airlines have offset some of the increase through hedging—in effect, paying extra to lock in the top price they'll pay for some of their fuel.

The latest price increase started early last week. Delta Air Lines Inc. tried to raise many fares by up to $20 per round trip, but other big airlines sided with a $10 increase started by AMR Corp.'s American Airlines.

Southwest waited three days before matching American's move on Friday night. Other airlines had rolled back fare hikes on routes where they compete with Southwest and other discount carriers, but they revived the full increase once Southwest raised prices too, Seaney said.

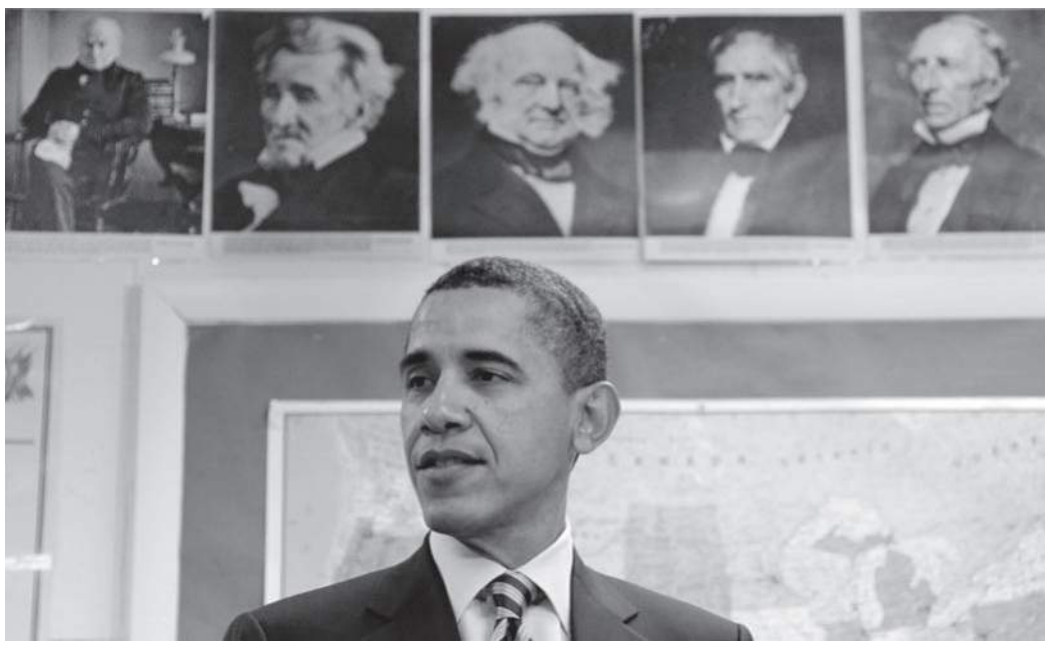
Low-cost airlines JetBlue, AirTran and Virgin America also raised prices, virtually assuring that the increase will become permanent, he said.

There were only four broad price increases in all of 2010, and two of those occurred in December. The flurry of fare hikes so far this year mirrors the rapid rise in fares and fuel surcharges in early 2008, when oil prices were heading toward record levels. Oil prices have soared in the past three weeks, approaching $107 a barrel on Monday, because of unrest in the Middle East.

Delta and AMR Corp.'s American Airlines—second- and third-biggest carriers—had already announced smaller growth plans for this year. Flights that were profitable when fuel was cheaper can become money-losers at these prices.

Nation

Obama restarts Guantanamo trials



AP

President Barack Obama talks to student during a visit to Advance Placement History Class with Austrian Prime Minister Julia Gillard at Wakefield High School, Monday March, 7, 2011, in Arlington, Va.

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama reversed course Monday and ordered a resumption of military trials for terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, making his once ironclad promise to close the isolated prison look even more distant.

Guantanamo has been a major political and national security headache for the president since he took office promising to close the prison within a year, a deadline that came and went without him ever setting a new one.

Obama made the change with clear reluctance, bowing to the reality that Congress' vehement opposition to trying detainees on U.S. soil leaves them nowhere else to go. The president emphasized his preference for trials in federal civilian courts, and his administration blamed congressional meddling for closing off that avenue.

"I strongly believe that the American system of justice is a key part of our arsenal in the war against al-Qaida and its affiliates, and we will continue to draw on all aspects of our justice system—including (federal) courts—to ensure that our security and our values are strengthened," Obama said in a statement.

"Going forward, all branches of government have a responsibility to come together to forge a strong and durable approach to defend our nation and the values that define who we are as a nation."

The first Guantanamo trial likely to proceed under Obama's new order would involve Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the alleged mastermind of the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole. Al-Nashiri, a Saudi of Yemeni descent, has been imprisoned at Guantanamo since 2006.

Defense officials have said that of the around 170 detainees at Guantanamo, about 80 are expected to face trial by military commission.

On Monday, the White House reiterated that the administration remains committed to eventually closing Guantanamo—which is on a U.S. Navy base—and that Monday's actions were in pursuit of that goal. But the outcome Obama wants seemed even more distant.

Critics of the military commission system, which was established specifically to deal with the detainees at Guantanamo, contend that suspects are not given some of the most basic protections afforded people prosecuted in American courts and that that serves as a recruitment tool for terrorists.

Obama's administration has enacted some changes to the military commission system while aiming to close down Guantanamo.

More than two dozen detainees have been charged there, but the charges against a number of them were dismissed in the wake of Obama's order in January 2009 to halt the commission process.

So far six detainees have been convicted and sentenced, including Ali Hamza al-Bahlul, Osama bin Laden's media specialist who told jurors he had volunteered to be the 20th Sept. 11 hijacker. He is serving a life sentence at Guantanamo.

Meanwhile, the first Guantanamo detainee tried in civilian court—in New York—was convicted in November on just one of more than 280 charges that he took part in the al-Qaida bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa. That case ignited strident opposition to any further such trials.

Another case is that of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the professed mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who had been slotted for trial in New York before Obama bowed to political resistance and blocked the Justice Department's plans. With the military tribunals set to restart, it's likely Mohammed will be put back in that system to face trial alongside other admitted 9/11 conspirators.

Wis. gov. rebuffs Democrats' request for meeting

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Wisconsin Democrats who fled the state nearly three weeks ago asked Monday for a meeting with Gov. Scott Walker to talk about changes to his plan to eliminate most public workers' union rights, a request the governor dismissed as "ridiculous."

Walker said he and his administration have been in communication with at least a couple of the AWOL Senate Democrats about a deal that could bring them back, but the lawmaker who asked for the meeting, Senate Minority Leader Mark Miller, "is firmly standing in the way."

That accusation led to a flurry of angry responses from Democrats who said Walker was misrepresenting the talks. The sometimes-angry exchange suggested that any resolution to the stalemate was farther away than ever.

"Right now, I'm so damn mad at his misrepresentation of the truth and the public should be as well," said Sen. Bob Jauch, one of two Democrats who had talked last week with the Senate Republican leader about possible compromises. "Trust is completely broken down now. I don't believe anything he says."

The standoff has drawn national attention and placed Wisconsin at the center a vigorous debate over the future of union rights. Walker's proposal to balance the state budget remains in limbo because, without the 14 Democrats, the state Senate does not have enough members present for a quorum.

The senators said pressure is mounting on Walker and the GOP to compromise after weeks of protests that have drawn tens of thousands of people to the Capitol.

In addition, polls show substantial opposition to the governor and his plan, and recall efforts have been launched against Republican senators. Recall efforts have also begun against the Democrats.

"The problem for the Democrats is to figure out how to come back and not be seen as conceding," said Charles Franklin, a University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor and founder of pollster.com.

"Both sides have been so strongly supported by their constituencies that it makes it awfully hard to compromise unless they can find a way to both claim victory," Franklin said. "And that's certainly difficult."

Walker tried to place blame for the stalemate on Miller, the Democratic leader in the Senate, saying he blocked progress on talks with Jauch and Sen. Tim Cullen.

Report says too many whites, men leading military

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. military is too white and too male at the top and needs to change recruiting and promotion policies and lift its ban on women in combat, an independent report for Congress said Monday.

Seventy-seven percent of senior officers in the active-duty military are white, while only 8 percent are black, 5 percent are Hispanic and 16 percent are women, the report by an independent panel said, quoting data from September 2008.

One barrier that keeps women from the highest ranks is their inability to serve in combat units. Promotion and job opportunities have favored those with battlefield leadership credentials.

The report ordered by Congress in 2009 calls for greater diversity in the military's leadership so it will better reflect the racial, ethnic and gender mix in the armed forces and in American society.

Efforts over the years to develop a more equal opportunity military have increased the number of women and racial and ethnic minorities in the ranks of leadership. But, the report said, "despite undeniable successes ... the armed forces have not yet succeeded in developing a continuing stream of leaders who are as diverse as the nation they serve."

"This problem will only become more acute as the racial, ethnic and cultural makeup of the United States continues to change," said the report from the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, whose more than two dozen members included current and former military personnel as well as businessmen and other civilians.

Having military brass that better mirrors the nation can inspire future recruits and help create trust among the general population, the commission said.

Among recommendations is that the military eliminate policies that exclude women from combat units, phasing in additional career fields and units that they can be assigned to as long as they are qualified. A 1994 combat exclusion policy bans women from being assigned to ground combat units below the brigade level even though women have for years served in combat situations.

"If you look at today's battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's not like it was in the Cold War, when we had a defined battlefield," retired Air Force Gen. Lester L. Lyles, the commission's chairman, said in an interview. "Women serve—and they lead—military security, military police units, air defense units, intelligence units, all of which have to be right there with combat veterans in order to do the job appropriately."

Because they are technically attached to, but not assigned to, combat units, they don't get credit for being in combat arms, something important for promotion to the most senior ranks.

Lyles said the commission consulted a panel of enlisted women on the issue. "I didn't hear, `Rah, rah, we want to be in combat,'" Lyles said. "But I also didn't hear, `We don't want to be in combat.' What they want is an equal opportunity to serve where their skills allow them to serve."

ACROSS THE NATION

Prosecutors seek mental exam for Tucson suspect

PHOENIX (AP)—Prosecutors on Monday asked a judge to commit the suspect in the shooting rampage that wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords to a federal facility where he can be evaluated by psychologists to determine whether he suffers from a mental defect that makes him incompetent to stand trial. They cited a YouTube video, in which prosecutors believe a hooded Jared Lee Loughner burns an American flag, and a photo posted on MySpace of the type of gun used in the Jan. 8 shooting to suggest that the 22-year-old has mental issues. The video, entitled "America: Your Last Memory In A Terrorist Country!", shows a person thought to be Loughner wearing garbage bags on the lower part of his body and features a heavy metal song that repeatedly contains the lyrics "Let the bodies hit the floor."

Trial for ex-Aryan Nations lawyer delayed in Idaho

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP)—The federal trial of a former Aryan Nations attorney accused of hiring a man to kill his wife and her mother was delayed again Monday and will be moved to Boise, Idaho, because of extensive pretrial publicity. Jury selection was scheduled to begin Monday in Edgar Steele's trial, and 70 potential jurors were called to the federal courthouse. But U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill decided to reverse his ruling from last week and grant defense lawyers a delay so they'd have more time to prepare. The trial will now start in April. It is the third delay that Steele has been granted.

Fatal shooting prompts outcry among Sikhs, Muslims

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Sikhs and Muslims say they will not be deterred after two elderly men were gunned down, one fatally, in a suburb south of California's state capital. Police in Elk Grove near Sacramento are investigating Friday's slaying as a possible hate crime, potentially linked to the men's appearance. Both were Sikhs and wore turbans and sported long beards. Navi Kaur (NA'vee Kar), the granddaughter of the man who died in the shooting, says Sikhs would not bow to extremists. During a news conference Monday, she said her community "will continue to wear our turbans proudly."

Asia

China: Tibet won't fall apart if Dalai Lama dies

BEIJING (AP)—Tibet will likely experience small shock waves when the Dalai Lama dies, but a Chinese official said Monday that the government would not now allow any serious instability to rock the region.

Although the Tibetan region is quiet now, it was roiled by violent anti-government riots three years ago that killed at least 22 people and set off a wave of protests across Tibetan areas of western China. Beijing blamed the unrest on followers of the Dalai Lama, who it says are seeking to separate Tibet from China. The Tibetan spiritual leader has denied that, saying he is working only for a high degree of autonomy under Chinese rule.

In the wake of the riots, China closed off the remote Himilayan region, barring international tourists for about a year. On Monday, Chinese travel agents said they had been ordered not to allow foreign visitors into the region around the upcoming third anniversary of the riots. Foreigners heading to Tibet have always needed special permits in addition to their Chinese visas and must travel with tour groups.

As part of its efforts to maintain control over Tibet, China regularly maligns the Dalai Lama, who is the head of Tibet's government-in-exile, and tries to play down his importance to the people in the region. Tibet's former Beijing-appointed governor, Qiangba Puncog, said Monday that the exiled spiritual leader still has religious clout but no political influence in China.

"Of course there will be some small shock waves due to religious factors, but we will take that into consideration and will surely guarantee long-term political stability in Tibet," Puncog, who now heads the regional legislature, told reporters in Beijing.

The Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1958, remains deeply revered among many Tibetans despite Beijing's decades-long campaign to vilify him and undermine his influence. The 76-year-old, who is 14th in the line of reincarnations, has at times insisted his successor would be born in exile but has also said the tradition could end with his death. He has talked about dividing his power, with his reincarnation carrying on spiritual duties while someone else—perhaps someone he appoints—takes up the leadership of the exile movement.

China says that the reincarnation tradition cannot be abandoned and that the next Dalai Lama must be born in a Tibetan area under Chinese control. After the death of the last Panchen Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's second-highest spiritual leader, Beijing refused to accept the Dalai Lama's choice and appointed another boy instead.

Evidence of the control China exerts on the region was evident in the order reported by travel agents Monday. Beijing Youth Travel Service saleswoman Li Jianyue said the order was conveyed verbally, as is often the case with official directives that the government does not wish to defend or explain.

"A few days ago, they told us not to organize the foreign groups this month," Li said. The unrest broke out March 14, 2008.

The top Chinese government official for Tibet, Zhang Qingli, confirmed there were restrictions but said they were being enforced for safety reasons, citing possible overcrowding and the bitterly cold winter weather.

Tourists from outside the country were banned entirely for more than a year following the 2008 riots in Lhasa. China responded with a massive military crackdown in which Tibetan rights groups say nearly 140 Tibetans were killed.

US negotiating security deal with Afghans

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The United States is beginning to decide what its responsibilities will be in Afghanistan after U.S. combat troops leave, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Monday, but he ruled out permanent military bases in the strategically important country.

President Hamid Karzai wants U.S. military support even as he heavily criticizes the current U.S.-led military campaign for being too quick on the trigger. Nine Afghan boys died in an accidental air strike last week, reopening a raw issue.

Gates said the U.S. is interested in keeping a military presence in this former al-Qaida haven beyond the planned end of combat in three years. At a news conference with Karzai, Gates said a team of U.S. officials would arrive here next week to begin negotiations over a new compact for U.S.-Afghan security relations after 2014, when all international combat forces are supposed to be gone. U.S. forces have been in Afghanistan since 2001, and President Barack Obama has repeatedly said the war is not open-ended.

The Pentagon chief also said the U.S. and its allies will be "well positioned" to begin withdrawing forces in July this year, although he gave no specifics. The withdrawal would continue through 2014, with Afghan forces gradually taking over the fight against the Taliban-led insurgency.

Gates' promise to draft a post-2014 "strategic partnership" with this poor, unstable nation is meant to reassure the mercurial Karzai, who fear that he and the country's fragile civilian government might be overthrown without U.S. military backing. It is not clear how far-reaching or binding the document would be.

Vexing questions remain about whether Kabul will be ready to govern by 2015 and prevent a return to extremist Taliban rule.

Gates opened his remarks by offering a personal apology for the children's deaths last week, an incident that had prompted Karzai on Sunday to issue a statement calling the deaths unacceptable and reject an apology issued by U.S. Gen. David Petraeus, the top commander of American and NATO forces in the country.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Evidence to incriminate Malaysia's Anwar expunged

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's High Court refused Tuesday to let prosecutors use crucial evidence that might link opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to semen found on the man who accused Anwar of sodomizing him. The ruling could severely hamper the prosecution's efforts to prove that Anwar had sex with his 25-year-old former aide. Anwar faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted of sodomy, a crime in this Muslim-majority country. Anwar has maintained the charge is part of a government plot to discredit him, but authorities deny any conspiracy. He has refused to provide his DNA samples, saying he fears investigators would tamper with the evidence.

Japan protests Chinese chopper that neared warship

TOKYO (AP)—Japan has complained to China after a Chinese helicopter approached a Japanese warship in the East China Sea. A Japanese defense official says a helicopter belonging to China's State Oceanic Administration came within 230 feet (70 meters) of the destroyer Monday as it was patroling near a disputed area. He spoke on condition of anonymity, citing protocol. He said the helicopter did not violate Japanese airspace, but it appeared to be filming the destroyer. Kyodo News agency said the incident occurred near undersea gas deposits both countries claim. Tensions between Japan and China soared after Chinese and Japanese boats crashed in the same sea last year. Japan scrambled fighter jets last Wednesday when Chinese warplanes approached nearby disputed islands.

World

Against Libya's rebels, Gadhafi controls the skies

AP

Anti-Gadhafi rebel runs away as smoke rises following an air strike by Libyan warplanes near a checkpoint of the anti-Libyan Leader Moammar Gadhafi rebels, in the oil town of Ras Lanouf, eastern Libya, Monday, March 7, 2011.

RAS LANOUF, Libya (AP)—Repeated airstrikes by Libyan warplanes on Monday illustrated the edge Moammar Gadhafi holds in his fight against rebel forces marching toward the capital: He controls the air. After pleading from the uprising's leaders, Britain and France began drafting a U.N. resolution for a no-fly zone in Libya that could balance the scales.

President Barack Obama warned that the U.S. and its NATO allies are still considering military options to stop what he called "unacceptable" violence by Gadhafi's regime. NATO decided to boost flights of AWACs surveillance planes over Libya from 10 to 24 hours a day, the U.S. Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder said.

"I want to send a very clear message to those who are around Colonel Gadhafi. It is their choice to make how they operate moving forward. And they will be held accountable for whatever violence continues to take place," Obama said during remarks in the Oval Office Monday.

Libyan warplanes launched multiple airstrikes Monday on opposition fighters regrouping at the oil port of Ras Lanouf on the Mediterranean coast a day after they were driven back by a heavy government counteroffensive aimed at stopping the rebel drive toward Tripoli, Gadhafi's stronghold.

One strike hit near a gas station in Ras Lanouf, blasting two large craters in the road and wounding at least two people in a pick up truck.

The rebels oppose any Western ground troops deploying in Libya, but they're pressing for a no-fly zone to relieve them of the threat from the air. The rebels can take on "the rockets and the tanks, but not Gadhafi's air force," said Ali Suleiman, a rebel fighter at Ras Lanouf. "We don't want a foreign military intervention (on the ground), but we do want a no-fly zone. We are all waiting for one."

Arab Gulf countries joined the calls for a no-fly zone, with the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates saying a conference of his country's neighbors that the U.N. Security Council should "shoulder its historical responsibility for protecting the Libyan people."

Still, Western military intervention does not seem imminent—and the warnings may be an attempt to intimidate Gadhafi with words before deeds. British and French officials said the no-fly resolution was being drawn up as a contingency and it has not been decided whether to put it before the U.N. Security Council, where Russia holds veto power and has rejected such a move. Western officials have said a no-fly zone does not require a U.N. mandate, but they would prefer to have one.

WORLD BRIEFS

Tunisia scraps hated police unit

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP)—Tunisia's prime minister named a new interim government on Monday and a much-hated police unit was disbanded as the interim leadership of this North African nation seeks to stabilize a country still finding its way after a popular revolt. Prime Minister Beji Caid Essebsi kept the heads of the key defense, interior, justice and foreign affairs ministries, but named new figures to six posts vacated last week. Some ministers who left were seen as too close to the regime of ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Others who resigned hope to run for office and were forced out. Caid Essebsi reiterated that his priorities are re-establishing security, rebuilding Tunisia's troubled economy, and bringing life back to normal in the country that has long been a tourist draw for sun-minded Europeans.

Egypt swears in new post-Mubarak Cabinet

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt's military rulers on Monday swore in a new Cabinet that includes new faces in key ministries, responding to protesters' demands that the new government be free of stalwarts of ousted President Hosni Mubarak. The new Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, a U.S.-educated civil engineer, is expected to be met with the approval of the pro-reform groups that led the 18-day uprising that forced Mubarak to step down on Feb. 11. State TV showed members of the government taking an oath during Monday's swearing-in-ceremony before the head of Egypt's Armed Forces Supreme Council, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi.

Satellite images: 300 burned buildings in Sudan

JUBA, Sudan (AP)—Satellite images from a group backed by actor George Clooney showed some 300 buildings burned to the ground from a militia attack in a contested area of Sudan, the group said Monday. Fighting elsewhere in Southern Sudan was reported to have killed more than 50 people. The buildings were burned in a village near the town of Abyei, a disputed area between north and south Sudan that is the most contentious issue between the two regions. Abyei has seen a wave of attacks in recent days that have killed more than 100 people and sent tens of thousands of people fleeing the area.

Campus Life

MBA is this year's mock trial competition champion

The CNMI Bar Association with assistance from the Judiciary hosted the 2011 CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition on Friday, March 4, at the Guma Hustisia/ Iimwal Aweewe/ House of Justice in Susupe, Saipan.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Marianas Baptist Academy team members receive the first place trophy as this year's champion of the CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition. They will represent the islands in the national competition in May.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Best witness for the defense is Maricel Atalig.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Vinni Orsini and Anastasia Schweiger emerge as this year's best witnesses for the plaintiffs.

Six high schools, representing both private and public schools from all three islands, participated in this scholastic competition where students portrayed the role of attorneys and witnesses in a fictitious case. Teams comprising six to 10 students spent months practicing with the assistance of their attorney and teacher coaches to present their cases before a panel of volunteer CNMI judges and attorneys. The students were evaluated based on their knowledge of the evidence and ability to present a logical and persuasive case.

This year's finalists were Mt. Carmel High School (2010 champions) and Marianas Baptist Academy (2010 runner-up).

Students from Marianas High School, Saipan Southern High School, Tinian High School, and Rota High School also competed in the event.

Marianas Baptist Academy took home the championship this year and received gift certificates from the Hyatt and National Office Supply and Marianas Resort and Spa. Mt. Carmel as runner-up received gift certificates from the Pacific Islands Club and the Hyatt.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Students from Mt. Carmel High School are joined by volunteer coach Galvin DeLeon Guerrero on stage to receive the second place trophy in this year's CNMI High School Mock Trial Competition.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

The competition's professionalism award goes to the team of Rota High School.

The Public School System will send the MBA team to Phoenix, Arizona, in May to represent the CNMI at the annual National High School Mock Trial Competition.

Following the competition, students gathered for an award ceremony at the Fiesta Resort and Spa. During the ceremony, Rota High School received the Supreme Court Professionalism Award and several students were individually recognized. Joycelynn Atalig (RHS), Dong He Im (MBA) and Mary Mendiola Hocog (THS) earned best attorney awards and received gift certificates from Joeten Enterprises. Anastasia Schweiger (Mt. Carmel), Vinnie Orsini, (MHS) and Maricel Atalig (RHS) won best witness awards and received cell phones from IT&E.

The students and the CNMI Bar Association thank the following sponsors and volunteers who made the competition and award ceremony possible: Fiesta Resort and Spa, Pacific Trading Co., Herman's Modern Bakery, NMI Judiciary Historical Society, Joeten Enterprises, Coca Cola, Hyatt Regency Saipan, National Office Supply, Pacific Islands Club, IT&E, J's Restaurant, Marianas Resort and Spa, Top Notch, offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, Sen. Pete P. Reyes, Reps. Francisco S. Dela Cruz, \Joseph M. Palacios and Ramon A. Tebuteb; Teresa Kim-Tenorio, Suzanne Steffy, the staff of the Supreme and Superior Courts, and all volunteer judges, jurors, and coaches. ***(PR)***

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Special mock trial awardees are presented their individual recognitions. From right, Mary Hocog, best attorney for the defense; Joycelynn Atalig and Dong Hee Im, best attorneys for the plaintiffs.

Hopwood gets 2nd place in Academic Challenge Bowl

Hopwood Junior High emerged as the runner-up in the 9th Annual Academic Challenge Bowl for middle schools, which was hosted by Saipan Southern High's National Honor Society. With the exception of Calvary Christian Academy, Hopwood bested all other teams from private and public schools, during the intense competition on Feb. 26, 2011.

The Hopwood team, composed of coach Sharleen Crisostimo and Carmelita Ada, and students Ethan Manalili, Joann Bandales, Mursher Alam, Daril Hermogenes, and Angelica Mateo were awarded the runner-up trophy. They were also recognized in this past Friday's flag ceremony held at the school.

Last year's champions, Marianas Baptist Academy, placed third in this edition of the Academic Challenge Bowl.

"I feel amazed to be able to reach that high in this bowl; of course we're all smart at Hopwood. I wish we won first, but being second is still a prestigious honor," said eighth grader Hermogenes.

"I was proud because it was the first time Hopwood had ever won second place in this Challenge Bowl," said Alam, a seventh grader. "I thought the event was enjoyable and cool."

"I felt pretty good, it was my first time and was real nervous, but feel very accomplished to have been a part of the event," said 8th grader Manalili.

The eight other schools that participated in the contest included CCA, MBA, Chacha Oceanview Junior High, Saipan International School, Grace Christian Academy, Tinian Junior High, and Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. High.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

The Hopwood Junior High School team members are joined by their teachers, coaches, and principal Jonas Barcinas after winning the second place trophy in the 9th Annual Academic Challenge Bowl for middle schools, which was hosted by Saipan Southern High's National Honor Society on Feb. 26, 2011.

Top leadership of Rota school's Buck Battalion changes hands

The Rota High School JROTC Buck Battalion held its change of command ceremony on March 2, 2011, at the gymnasium to honor the accomplishments of outgoing commander C/Lt. Col. Vincent A. Manglona and to officially welcome incoming battalion commander C/Lt. Col. Blaine Mesngon, who will lead the battalion for the remainder of this school year.

C/Maj. Jennylynn Dela Cruz was also promoted to battalion executive officer. The ceremony also paid tribute to the men and women who are serving in the armed forces.

This bi-annual event was witnessed by the entire RHS faculty and student body. Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola was the inspirational speaker and RHS principal Sharlene Manglona gave the opening remarks.

Many community members were in attendance, including the Municipal Council's George O. Hocog and Prudencio A. Manglona Jr., CNMI PTSA Advisory Council vice president, Edita Taimanao, RHS PTA president Therese Hizon and her officers, and resident Labor director Richard Taisacan, as well as parents and family members.

"We would like to thank Mr. Abel Hocog, Rota's professional videographer, for filming the ceremony [so it could be viewed] on Rota's local television channel," a battalion statement said.

The new JROTC leadership will be challenged with a new mission at the end of this month. They have been aggressively planning, organizing, and coordinating the training sites for the CNMI Multiple School Unit JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge on Rota from March 22 to 27. Training will include 150 cadets from all five high schools who will participate in various leadership positions and team building activities.

"The Buck Battalion would like to express our profound appreciation to Lt. Col. Robert Gay, PSS MSU JROTC Director of Army Instruction, for selecting the beautiful island of Rota as the training site. Additionally, we would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Rita Sablan, Commissioner of Education, for supporting this annual event, Mayor Melchor Mendiola for providing site support, and Mrs. Maria S. Quitugua, principal of Dr. Rita Inos Junior High School, for the use of the campus as the campsite.

"The Buck Battalion is anxiously awaiting the arrival of their cadet counterparts which will invariably result in the development of new skills and interisland collaboration in numerous training events under a field environment," the statement said. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Incoming battalion commander C/Lt. Col. Blaine Mesngon gets his new rank at the Buck Battalion change of command ceremony on Rota.

GREEN MEADOW PTA THANKS WALKERS & SUPPORTERS

The Parents-Teachers Association of Green Meadow School expresses its sincere appreciation to all the participants and generous supporters to the "2nd Annual Walkaton – 2011 Walk for a Heart". The successful event held in the morning of March 5, 2011 was one of GMS PTA fundraising activities with the goal of raising money to pay all costs the school will incur in participating in this year's Parade of Books". As suggested by students, parents and school staff, GMS PTA will be using also part of the walkathon proceeds as contribution to "Make-A-Wish Foundation". The organizers of the walkathon wish to say "Thank You" also to LSG Sky Chef, NMC Nursing Department, and to all the people and corporate sponsors who generously contributed time, efforts, encouragement, materials and supplies which made the success of the event possible.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam's SCA gets full 5-year accreditation

GUAM—The Southern Christian Academy on Rt. 2 Oceanside Agat, Guam, has received a full five-year accreditation from the Association of Christian Schools International (acsi.org), effective July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2015.

In a letter from the ACSI international director for Asia and Latin America, David K. Wilcox, Ph.D., he congratulated the school for getting full accreditation for its Kindergarten through Grade 12 classes.

A member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, ACSI is the leading accreditation institution for Christian schools in the U.S. and around the world with more than 5,000 member schools in over 100 countries serving 70,000 teachers and administrators and 1.2 million students.

At the close of their visit, the ACSI visitation team had this commendation to give: "We commend SCA for the initiative it has taken to intentionally shape the campus culture into a fully orbed Christian environment that is a delight to students, educates in a Christian way, and has made discipleship central to all that it is doing. This effort has in no way diminished the intellectual and academic life on the campus but has enhanced it."

The board of Christian Life Center that oversees the school and its pastor, Rev. Steven McManus, thank the school's hard-working faculty and staff, and the family and friends of SCA in making this happen. McManus especially commends school principal Rev. Andresina McManus for her spiritual leadership and assistant principal Faith Dela Rosa, who served as the accreditation steering committee chairperson.

Southern Christian Academy began as a small kinder through elementary school in two old beach houses with 20-plus students in 1994, with McManus serving as the academy pastor. SCA has since grown to include middle and high school reaching an enrollment of 150 students. The school expanded to a 10,000 square foot educational facility on a small campus that is now bursting at the seams. To address its future, SCA has acquired a seven-acre lot in Umang, Agat with a breathtaking view overlooking Agat Bay. Plans are currently in place to build a new 500-student capacity, 28,000 sq. ft campus sporting a new gymnasium, playgrounds, and a full-size football field.

The unique characteristic of SCA from its inception is its small student-to-teacher ratio, the overall Christian maturity of its faculty and staff, and its devotion to high academic achievement. Enrollment is now open for all grades for SY 2011-12. Interested applicants may call SCA at 565-7020. ***(PR)***

Life & Style

Duchess of York got loan from wealthy US pedophile

LONDON (AP)—Prince Andrew and his ex-wife Sarah are in the spotlight for their ties to a wealthy U.S. sex offender—he for being pictured with an underage masseuse at the man's home and she for accepting money from the American to help pay off her massive debts.

Andrew's ex-wife, Sarah, Duchess of York, confirmed in an interview Monday in the Evening Standard newspaper that she did receive financial help from convicted U.S. sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. But she claimed to have known nothing about his background and vowed to repay the 15,000 pounds ($24,500) he advanced to settle a debt to her former personal assistant, Johnny O'Sullivan.

"I am just so contrite I cannot say," the duchess was quoted as saying. "Whenever I can I will repay the money and will have nothing ever to do with Jeffrey Epstein ever again."

The payment was handled through Andrew's office, the duchess said, and she wasn't directly involved. There was no immediate comment from Andrew's office.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister David Cameron gave his backing to Andrew, who has also been under fire for hosting the son of Tunisia's dictator shortly before a popular uprising overthrew the leader and his relationship with Seif al-Islam Gadhafi, one of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's sons.

Some politicians had urged that the prince be sacked from his position as the U.K. trade envoy, although Business Secretary Vince Cable noted that the government had no power to fire him—he's a volunteer, not an employee.

Over the weekend, British newspapers carried photographs of Andrew with his arm around a young woman who now claims to be one of Epstein's underage victims. There has been no suggestion, however, that Andrew was involved in inappropriate relationships with underage women. Asked whether Cameron had full confidence in the prince, spokesman Steve Field said "yes."

"The prime minister thinks he is doing an important job and is making a major contribution and he is supportive of him in that role," Field said. "We are not reviewing that role in any way."

The comments from Cameron's office appeared at odds with an earlier statement from Cable, who told the British Broadcasting Corp. that "obviously there are conversations that will take place with him (Andrew) about what he is to do in future."

AP

In this May 26, 2010 file photo, Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, speaks at the Book Expo America in New York.

Andrew draws no pay for his trade promotion work, but his expenses are paid by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. Expenses in 2007, the latest year available, were 128,000 pounds.

The government rounded up a string of endorsements for the prince from British business leaders, including Royal Dutch Shell's managing director, Malcolm Brinded; Peter Levene, chairman of Lloyd's of London; and Sir John Rose, chief executive of Rolls Royce Group.

"As first a diplomat and then as a banker, I have seen at first hand the tangible benefits which have flowed from the work of the duke of York," said Sir Thomas Harris, vice chairman of Standard Chartered Capital Markets.

Mike Gapes, a senior opposition Labour Party lawmaker, said Monday that Parliament could not hold Andrew to account because he is a royal.

"We can't ask questions about the truth of the allegations that were in the newspapers and elsewhere. I think his position is untenable," Gapes said in a BBC interview.

Epstein pleaded guilty in 2008 to two prostitution offenses in Florida, and was sentenced to 18 months in prison and a further year under house arrest. Prosecutors said Epstein paid several girls younger than 18 for naked massages that sometimes became sexual encounters.

Much of the controversy in Andrew's life has involved his marriage to Sarah in 1986 and their divorce 10 years later. They have two daughters. A key moment in the break up was the publication of photographs of a topless Sarah being kissed by a boyfriend.

Since then, the duchess has made and lost large sums of money, and she got into more trouble last year after an undercover newspaper reporter filmed her apparently offering to sell access to her ex-husband in return for 500,000 pounds ($724,000).

In Monday's interview, she said with Andrew's help she had settled all of her debts, which had been estimated at around 5 million pounds ($8.1 million).

"I have made another huge error in my life in order to get debt free but the duke and I are a united front on all that has happened over the last few days," the Evening Standard quoted her as saying. "He, my girls and I are a unit who will always stick together even though we live separate lives."

The duchess said she had made "a terrible, terrible error of judgment" in accepting help from Epstein, though she said she had no direct contact with him.

"Once again, my errors have compounded and rebounded and also inadvertently impacted on the man I admire most in the world—the duke (Andrew)," she said. "He has supported me and come to my rescue again and again and there is absolutely nothing that I would not do for him."

Book explores origins of simple gesture: The kiss

By LEANNE ITALIE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—Birds do it. Bees do it. No, not that! This is about kissing, the simple gesture with a wallop that spans time and place but remains largely unexplained.

Anthropologists have their theories. So do neurologists, biologists, psychologists and endocrinologists. Einstein was interested. Darwin, too. So why doesn't anybody know how it all began, and why we do it in the first place?

Kirshenbaum

Sheril Kirshenbaum, a researcher at the University of Texas at Austin, has compiled a mother lode of fragmented studies and observations from historians and sociologists, brain experts and animal-watchers in a surprisingly slim and definitely curious new book, "The Science of Kissing: What Our Lips Are Telling Us."

Her conclusion? Inconclusive. The act of "osculation"—in technical parlance—is ingrained in more than 90 percent of cultures around the world. If they don't place lips on lips—or lips elsewhere—they lick or nibble with the same goals in mind.

If we could unravel its origins, Kirshenbaum surmises, we could unlock a trove of evolutionary and physiological mysteries that might carry the kiss from merely interesting to incredibly valuable.

Scientists cannot decide whether kissing is instinctual (newborns pucker for their first taste of mother's milk), cultural (learned, that is, for joy or survival) or deeper still (ingrained in our very DNA), or all of the above.

They suspect, Kirshenbaum said, that the practice has come and gone through the ages and might have surfaced as an outgrowth of sniffing as a way to suss out the familiar. The first kiss as greeting, according to some anthropologists, might have been a nose-to-nose exchange to recognize, reconnect or check on a person's health through smells.

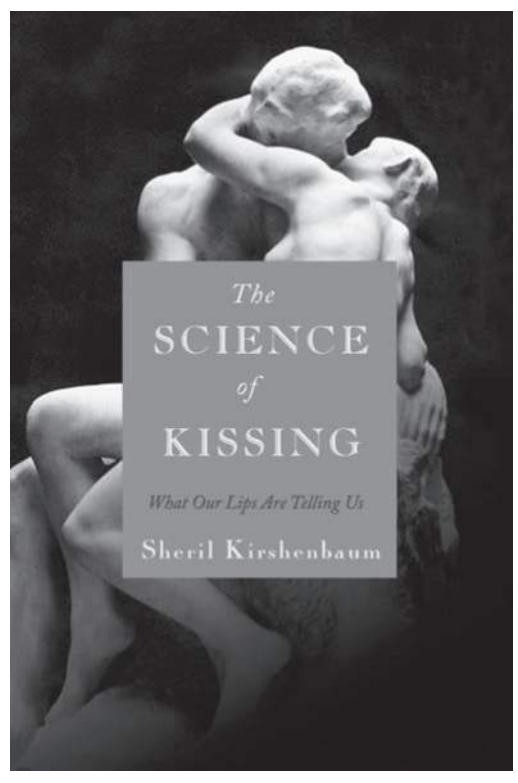
The color red may also play a prominent role in the rise of the kiss. The hue takes us back millions of years to "red as reward" for ancestors in search of ripe fruits amid leaves and bush. It is possible that over all those years of man learning to walk upright, he also became hard-wired to appreciate the flashy color, primed to seek it out wherever it occurred, including the everted red lips on a woman's face and other parts of her anatomy.

Gender when it comes to the kiss was something of a surprise to Kirshenbaum.

"The gender differences stood out," she said. "I don't like gender stereotypes at all, but I saw so much research along that divide. Men tend to describe kissing as more of a means to an end, hoping it leads to more, whereas women tend to place a lot more emphasis on the act of kissing itself."

Kissing was first documented in human societies around 1500 B.C., in India's Vedic Sanskrit texts that serve as the basis of the Hindu religion. One describes the practice of smelling with the mouth. Another recounts how a "young lord of the house repeatedly licks the young woman," which could symbolize a kiss or related caress, said the kissing detective Kirshenbaum.

By the end of the Vedic period, she said, Satapatha Brahmana talks of lovers "setting mouth to mouth," and early Hindu law reprimands a man



AP

This book cover image courtesy of Grand Central Publishing shows the cover of "The Science of Kissing: What Our Lips Are Telling Us," by Sheril Kirshenbaum.

for "drinking the moisture of the lips" of a slave woman. From there, kissing, in India, at least, marched on to the Kama Sutra, a sex guide of the third century that covers a whole lot of ground and includes an entire chapter on kissing alone.

India was not only the only hotbed of kissing. In the world of Herodotus, according to his fifth-century B.C. text the "Histories," Persian kisses ranged from lip on lip for equals to the ground or feet by an exorbitantly lower status person to a higher one.

A Babylonian creation story recorded on stone tablets in the seventh-century B.C., based on much older oral legends, includes references to a kiss of greeting and a kiss of the ground or feet in supplication, Kirshenbaum said.

The Roman emperor Caligula had subjects kiss his feet, which was also a custom throughout the Middle Ages. Charles Dickens was no fan in 1861, when he found foot-kissing of popes in the Catholic Church a "slavish self-abasement."

Mythology, literature, the visual arts are all full of kisses, let alone both testaments of the Bible. Derided by some through the ages as dirty or worse, lips on lips went where Europeans ventured, and Western-style kissing spread to much of the world. Kissing turned into handshaking during the Great Plague years in 1660s London.

Kirshenbaum estimates that today more than 6 billion of us, East and West, lock lips socially or romantically on a regular basis. The German language alone has 30 words for kissing, including one, "nachkussen," which is a kiss to compensate for those that have not occurred, according to Kirshenbaum.

Human lips, she learned, are packed with nerve endings that are extremely sensitive to pressure, temperature and other means of stimulation. They are the perfect little engines, and erogenous zones, since the slightest touch stimulates a very large part of the brain.

More than half of men and women, 59 percent of men and 66 percent of women, have ended a relationship because of a bad kiss, according to one study cited by Kirshenbaum.

"It really serves as a litmus test for our future together," she said. "Very often we feel like we're with the perfect person and our lips meet and often it doesn't feel right. There's something not magical there."

Video of Lohan leaving store with necklace aired

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lindsay Lohan is shown in surveillance video broadcast Monday texting and trying on multiple pieces of jewelry in front of a clerk in a Southern California store that has accused her of stealing a $2,500 necklace.

Snippets of the footage taken by four cameras in the Venice store of Kamofie & Co. were aired by "Entertainment Tonight" along with analysis by attorneys not handling the case.

The show obtained nearly 45 minutes of footage from the store's four security cameras, which captured the actress smiling as she entered the Venice shop on Jan. 22. "Entertainment Tonight" said it plans to air footage showing Lohan wearing the necklace involved in her criminal case during a show on Tuesday.

Lohan returns to court on Thursday, when her attorney will tell a judge whether the "Mean Girls" actress will accept a plea deal in the felony grand theft case that guarantees a jail sentence.

The video was sold by a representative of Kamofie to a commercial images unit of The Associated Press, which then licensed it exclusively to "Entertainment Tonight."

Christopher Spencer, a crisis management expert who represents the jewelry store, explained in a statement Monday the reason the footage was sold.

"Most important, we were upset with the various mischaracterizations we were seeing and hearing about the video and its contents, and we felt the video should be allowed to speak for itself," Spencer's statement read.

AP

In this Feb. 9, 2011 file photo, actress Lindsay Lohan appears in court during her arraignment on a felony grand theft charge at the LAX Airport Courthouse in Los Angeles.

"There were also many media inquiries asking for release of the video, which is not any sort of secret evidence. The bottom line is we felt there was far too much speculation about the video recording, and that it was right for the public to be able to see the video itself."

A website, necklacevideo.com, has been registered and may be used to stream the video online at a later date.

The footage's release could impact Lohan's criminal case, which is the most serious charge the troubled actress has faced. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Keith Schwartz has promised to send Lohan to jail if she accepts a plea deal to end the case early.

The surveillance video almost certainly would have been aired at a preliminary hearing if Lohan decided to fight the case.

Lohan's attorney, Shawn Holley, did not return phone messages seeking comment.

John Lynch, a district attorney's supervisor who has overseen Lohan's case, said its early release was unfortunate.

"You like to present your evidence in the courtroom," Lynch said. "That just doesn't happen as often as it used to." He noted that he would not authenticate the footage "Entertainment Tonight" aired.

"With regard to the question of Lindsay Lohan's guilt or innocence, we repeat that Kamofie and Company never gave permission to Ms. Lohan to remove the necklace from the store," Spencer said in his statement. "The rest is up to the jury."

Several defense attorneys contacted by the AP said the release probably benefits Lohan as she seeks to negotiate a better plea deal or will try to prove her innocence.

"I think it gives the defense a plea bargaining chip or a sentencing chip," said Stan Goldman, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

He said the release has complicated the case for prosecutors.

"They had a nice straightforward theft case," Goldman said. "Now they've got something that's really being messed up by the victims in the case trying to get something out of it. You want your victims to be sympathetic."

Criminal defense attorney Mark Geragos, who defended Winona Ryder in her shoplifting case, said, "It certainly lends credence to the defense position that the store created this 'crime' for a promotional opportunity."

Spencer said Kamofie was not seeking to profit from the tape's release. "Any suggestion that this was a publicity stunt or that there was a profit motive is a distraction from the fact that releasing the tape will allow the onslaught of calls and e-mails to receive the response as to what is on the video," he wrote.

Warner: Sheen fired from 'Two and a Half Men'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Charlie Sheen was fired Monday from "Two and a Half Men" by Warner Bros. Television following the actor's bouts of wild partying, repeated hospitalizations and a bitter media campaign against his studio bosses.

The action was taken after "careful consideration" and is effective immediately, the studio said in a statement. No decision has been made on the show's future without its star, Warner spokesman Paul McGuire said.

Sheen, 45, who has used TV, radio and social media to create a big megaphone for himself, was not silent for long.

In a text to The Associated Press, he responded with the F-word and, "They lose," followed by the word "Trolls." Asked if he planned to sue, Sheen texted back, "Big." As for his next move, Sheen texted, "A big one."

A call to his attorney, Marty Singer, seeking comment was not immediately returned Monday. CBS declined to comment.

The firing capped a rare, raging public battle between a Hollywood star and those who employ him, with Sheen claiming the right to live as he pleased—including the acknowledged use of illegal drugs, although he's said he is currently clean—as long as he showed up sober and ready to work.

AP

In this undated publicity image released by CBS, Jon Cryer, left, and Charlie Sheen are shown in a scene from "Two and a Half Men."

"Two and a Half Men," which debuted in 2003, starred Sheen as womanizing bachelor Charlie Harper, who creates an ad hoc family with his neurotic brother, the divorced Alan (Jon Cryer) and Alan's son, Jake (Angus T. Jones).

Warner and CBS had long faced a balancing act with Sheen as he underwent rehab and two ugly splits from wives No. 2 (Denise Richards) and No. 3 (Brooke Mueller Sheen). On one side was the wayward star, on the other was TV's most successful and highly lucrative sitcom, anchoring Monday for CBS and making hundreds of millions of dollars for Warner.

Last month, Warner canceled the remaining eight episodes of what was intended to be a 24-episode season of "Men," citing Sheen's public behavior and rants against executive producer Chuck Lorre.

In a series of interviews, including with ABC's "Good Morning America" and NBC's "Today" show, Sheen boasted about his "epic" partying, said he's fueled by "violent hatred" of his bosses and claimed to have kicked drugs at home in his "Sober Valley Lodge."

He glorified himself as a "rock star from Mars" with "fire breathing fists" and "Adonis DNA" and talked about his home life with two women he nicknamed his "goddesses."

The actor, who was among TV's highest-paid at a reported $1.8 million per episode for "Men," brashly said at one point that he would ask for $3 million if he signed a new contract for future seasons.

There was public fascination with the gloves-off battle. When Sheen added Twitter to the arsenal, he gained 1 million followers in an unprecedentedly brief 25 hours, leading Guinness World Records to establish a new category and crown him the champion. He now has well over 2 million followers.

But Sheen's professional conflict devolved into a custody battle over his 23-month-old twin sons with estranged wife Mueller Sheen. She used his public remarks, as well as conduct she claimed was threatening and violent, to seek a court order removing the children from his home last week.

While Sheen's text to AP suggested his next major role could be that of plaintiff in a lawsuit, the immediate question for Warner and CBS was whether to keep the show alive by bringing in a new cast member to join Cryer and Jones—the one-and-a-half men left.

Kate Middleton's family photos go online

LONDON (AP)—It's impossible not to like the new childhood pictures of Kate Middleton—and that's just how Buckingham Palace wants it.

Whether she is frolicking outdoors at age three, flashing a winning smile at five, hugging a jubilant boyfriend—Prince William—on their joint graduation day, Britain's future queen is an irresistible lassie.

Thousands of newspapers, TV stations and websites around the world immediately flashed the pictures moments after they appeared Monday on the official royal wedding site set up by Prince Charles' press team. You couldn't miss them even if you tried.

In times gone by, monarchs rose or fell on the strength of their armies and navies, but today—when constitutional monarchies like the House of Windsor depend on public goodwill—they need positive press coverage to build support with the masses.

Enter Operation Kate—the release of adorable family photos to an image-hungry global press corps. It's part of a sophisticated effort by the royal family to generate favorable coverage about the big event—and experts say so far it's working.

"The royals don't always get it right to start with," said royal historian Hugo Vickers. "They tend to be either behind the curve or ahead of it, but at the moment I think they're getting it absolutely right."

Queen Elizabeth II has often shown media savvy—it was at her request that her 1953 coronation was televised, a groundbreaking use of new technology that gave adoring Britons and much of the world a positive image of the country's youthful queen. Prince Charles' press operation also makes extensive use of Twitter and Facebook in a bid to reach younger people and shake his staid image.

"The royal family has embraced social media with real enthusiasm," Vickers said. "By using Twitter and Facebook, they are able to bypass journalists who sometimes have the unfortunate habit of putting a spin on things that the royals may not like."

But the perpetual tug-of-war with the press cuts both ways—just ask Prince Andrew, currently being skewered for his embarrassingly close ties to a billionaire U.S. pedophile who has also helped Andrew's ex-wife, Sarah Ferguson, pay off some of her personal debts.

No amount of media-spinning—or cute photos—can change the damning tone of the coverage of Andrew's and Sarah's links to a sex offender.

AP

In this undated image made available by in London, Monday March 7, 2011 by The Middleton Family, Kate Middleton, aged three-and-a-half is seen on holiday in England's Lake District.

Mike Tyson is a 'Real Housewives' fan

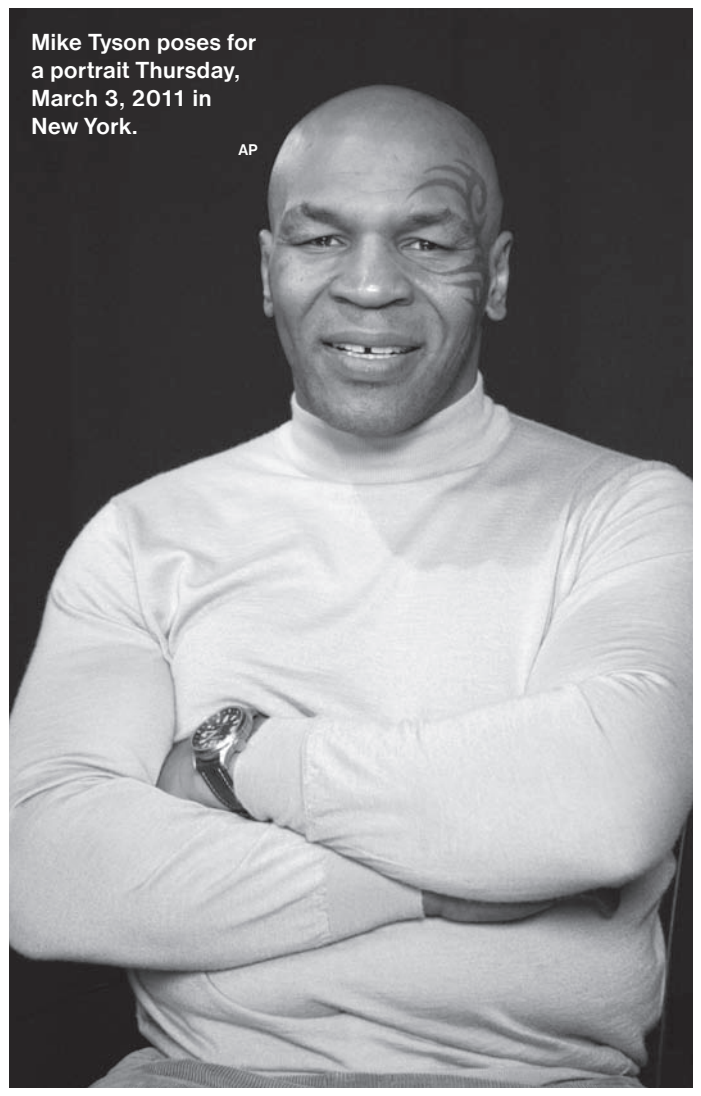
NEW YORK (AP)—Mike Tyson is taken with a new kind of sparring these days.

The former heavyweight champion admits he is a big fan of the "Real Housewives" franchise on the Bravo network.

Tyson says he likes the Beverly Hills series because he enjoys watching people who "spend a lot of money" but says his favorites are the New Jersey wives.

Tyson says he likes Bravo Senior Vice President Andy Cohen, who hosts a talk show on the network, "Watch What Happens Live," which often features the housewives. Tyson says he's willing to make an appearance, predicting he and Cohen would "laugh our butts off."

Tyson's own reality show, "Taking on Tyson," airs on the Animal Planet network. He also appears in "The Hangover 2," due out in May.



Mike Tyson poses for a portrait Thursday, March 3, 2011 in New York. AP

It takes more than talent to get a star

By RICH HELDENFELS
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Q: A story about Donald Sutherland getting his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame brought up a question I've been wondering about for a long time. What processes determine who gets the star? And for some actors, why is it so long to finally get it when they have been acting for so many years? In this case, Donald's son Kiefer got his first. How?

A: It may have depended on when each was nominated, and who was paying for that star.

Anyone can nominate a celebrity, provided you have written permission from the star or the star's management. There are five categories: motion pictures, television, radio, recording, and live theater performances. Kiefer Sutherland, chosen in 2008, is in the TV category; Donald Sutherland, added in January, is in the movie category. Bob Hope has stars in four categories, all but recordings; Gene Autry has all five.

A committee picks 15 to 25 honorees from the nominated each year; you can read more about the rules, and find a nomination form, at http://www.hollywoodchamber.net. But one rule in particular raises eyebrows. Once selected, a celebrity or his sponsors must come up with $30,000 "to pay for the creation and installation of the star, as well as maintenance of the Hollywood Walk of Fame."

■ ■ ■

Q: There is an actor who is really excellent. He was in "Downton Abbey" as Bates, a footman. In "Lark Rise to Candleford," he is the father of Laura. Who is he?

A: He is Brendan Coyle, an actor who was born in England and grew up in Dublin and London. Seeing a Shakespeare play inspired him to take up acting. Besides the credits you mentioned, he has been in "Prime Suspect 7: The Final Act:" and the British productions of "North & South" and "Jericho." He has taken on some physically challenging parts, including the lame Bates (written by "Downton Abbey" creator Julian Fellowes with Coyle in mind) and a blind man in the series "True Dare Kiss." He is also the great-nephew of Sir Matt Busby, a legendary soccer player. By the way, a second season of "Downton" is in the works.

■ ■ ■

Q: All the recent attention about the IBM computer Watson appearing on "Jeopardy" has jogged my memory about a movie released in the '70s (I think). It was about a computer that took over the world. I think the name of the computer was Colossus or Colossal. Don't remember any of the stars in it. Any info and availability would be helpful.

A: The movie was "Colossus: The Forbin Project," sometimes just called "The Forbin Project," from 1970. The cast included Eric Braeden and Susan Clark, with a script based on the first of three "Colossus" novels by D.F. Jones. It is on DVD. There has also been talk for several years about a new movie based on all three books.

■ ■ ■

Q: Have you seen the recent McNuggets commercial with a marching band? Whose band is in the blue uniforms?

A: While the commercial does not appear to show a specific band's logo, it includes members of the UCLA Bruins Marching Band.

■ ■ ■

Q: I'm a recent viewer of the "Daily Mass" on EWTN. What is the name of the church and its address? Are all the Masses said in Latin?

A: Except for special occasions, Mass is said in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, 5817 Old Leeds Road, Irondale, AL 35210. EWTN is based in Irondale. As for the Latin question, according to EWTN, "while the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) permitted the Mass to be celebrated in local languages, it also directed that Latin continue to be used in parts of Roman Rite liturgies. In compliance with renewed papal exhortations to use Latin in the liturgy, portions of EWTN's English-speaking Masses are prayed in Latin."

For information about EWTN and its programming, see http://www.ewtn.com.

Do you have a question or comment about movies, TV and other popular culture? Write to rheldenfels@thebeaconjournal.com or the Akron Beacon Journal, 44 E. Exchange St., Akron, Ohio 44309. Please mark the note for Mailbag and do not phone in questions. Letters may be edited. Individual replies cannot be guaranteed.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Summers: 'The Social Network' is 'fairly accurate'

BOSTON (AP)—Former Harvard President Larry Summers says a scene from "The Social Network" in which he's shown brushing off twin brothers who claim their idea for Facebook was stolen by a fellow student was pretty accurate. Summers was asked about it Monday at a Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce luncheon. The former U.S. treasury secretary said he's been told Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss thought he wasn't nearly as nice to them as portrayed in the movie. Summers jokingly acknowledged "people think I can be arrogant." If that's so, he said, "I probably was on that occasion." The Boston Globe also reports his former assistant, Colleen Richards Powell, told the luncheon group Summers didn't give the twins what they wanted, a penalty against Mark Zuckerberg, but "he was not mean to them."

Emmylou set to release new album, 'Hard Bargain'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country Music Hall of Fame member Emmylou Harris is ready to release a new album. "Hard Bargain" will be released April 26 and Harris is celebrating with shows in Austin, Texas, at South by Southwest and in New York and Los Angeles. The new album includes 11 originals by the 12-time Grammy winner with two covers of songs by Ron Sexsmith and album producer Jay Joyce. Two of the songs look back at her time with friends Kate McGarrigle ("Darlin' Kate) and Gram Parsons ("The Road").A deluxe version will include a DVD with six performances plus interviews. Fans who preorder now through the record label website will receive an exclusive manuscript lyric sheet of "The Road," some of which Harris will autograph.

'Last Comic Standing' hopeful Mike DeStefano dies

NEW YORK (AP)—Comedian Mike DeStefano, who finished among the top five finalists last season in NBC's "Last Comic Standing," has died. His representative at 3 Arts Entertainment confirmed DeStefano died Sunday in New York City. The representative wouldn't disclose DeStefano's age or the cause of death. Born in the Bronx, DeStefano was a former drug addict who became a drug counselor and then started a career in stand-up. He played at clubs, made television appearances and performed at festivals. He came in fourth place on "Last Comic Standing." DeStefano's death came just days before he was scheduled to perform his one-man show, "A Cherry Tree In The Bronx," in New York.

Neighbor is taken aback by block party proposition

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am a 50-year-old gay man. On New Year's Eve, there was a block party on the street I live on. My neighbors, "Tim" and "Marie," are a good-looking 30-ish couple.

I was watching the fireworks when Marie sat down next to me and said, "Tim and I would like to get to know you better. How about we drop by for drinks some night after we put the kids to bed?" She said this while stroking my upper thigh with her hand.

I find the idea of being intimate with her husband appealing, but I have never "been with" a woman and I don't think I want to be. It seems to me the most prudent approach would be to pass on this opportunity, but how do I do it without offending or causing embarrassment for one of my neighbors?

CAUGHT IN THE FIREWORKS, HOUSTON

DEAR CAUGHT: Does this neighbor know your sexual orientation? If the answer is no, just thank her and tell her you're not into threesomes. Because it has taken you so long to give her an answer, she probably won't be surprised that a liaison is not your cup of tea. However, if she does know, tell her with a wink: "Thanks for the offer—I'm not into threesomes. But you can send Tim over anytime."

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: After 30 years of marriage, my husband is more interested in watching politics on TV than interacting with me. We are, by mutual consent, no longer intimate—but he totally ignores me. He will talk to anyone who looks his way, but he doesn't talk to me.

His idea of doing something together is driving around the countryside for four hours looking at the scenery. He'll lie on the couch and watch TV or read while I'm a few feet away and not say more than a dozen words to me all day.

I can't do this much longer. What do you suggest?

NEGLECTED WIFE IN GREENVILLE, S.C.

DEAR NEGLECTED WIFE: Perhaps you should spend less time with your husband. Couples who spend a lot of time together can find conversation difficult because they have nothing fresh to bring to it.

Do some things with female friends so you won't feel so shut in and isolated. This way you will have more experiences you can discuss. Also schedule some diversions you can enjoy together that don't involve conversation. How about a movie or a play, or a volunteer activity you can both be involved in? If this doesn't help, then consider counseling.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I don't understand why people need others to take sides in an argument. If someone is upset and wants to cut someone out of his/her life, why does that person expect family and friends to do the same—even if the disagreement had nothing to do with them? Some of them lie to force the issue. I just don't understand—especially because we're talking about adults.

PUZZLED IN COON RAPIDS, MINN.

DEAR PUZZLED: They do it to punish (and isolate) the person they're mad at. However, if you make plain to the manipulator—because that's what the person is—that you will not be dragged into the middle of something that's not your business, you'll be better off.

P.S. What makes you think that all adults ACT like adults? Surely I'm not the only person who has seen a grown-up behave like a 5-year-old.

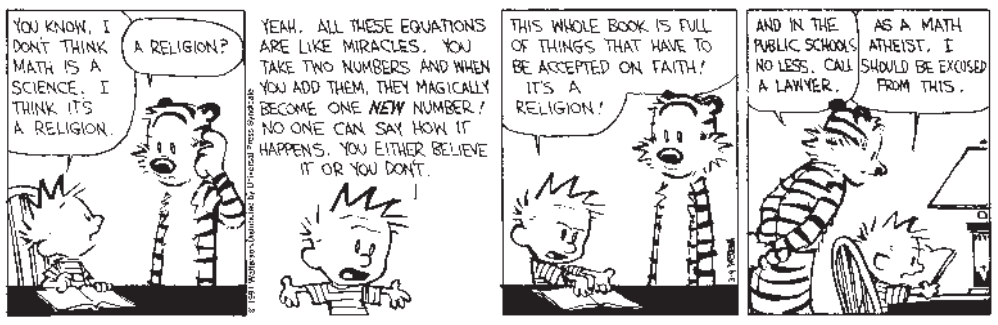
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

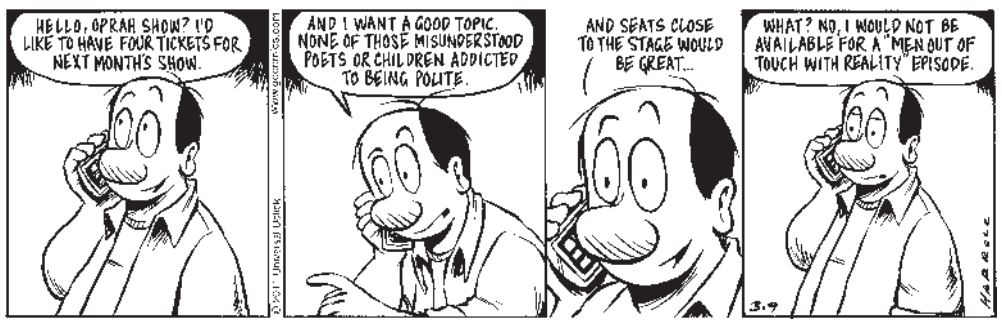

YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK MATH IS A SCIENCE. I THINK IT'S A RELIGION.
A RELIGION?
YEAH. ALL THESE EQUATIONS ARE LIKE MIRACLES. YOU TAKE TWO NUMBERS AND WHEN YOU ADD THEM, THEY MAGICALLY BECOME ONE NEW NUMBER! NO ONE CAN SAY HOW IT HAPPENS. YOU EITHER BELIEVE IT OR YOU DON'T.
THIS WHOLE BOOK IS FULL OF THINGS THAT HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED ON FAITH! IT'S A RELIGION!
AND IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NO LESS. CALL A LAWYER.
AS A MATH ATHEIST, I SHOULD BE EXCUSED FROM THIS.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HELLO, OPRAH SHOW? I'D LIKE TO HAVE FOUR TICKETS FOR NEXT MONTH'S SHOW.
AND I WANT A GOOD TOPIC. NONE OF THOSE MISUNDERSTOOD POETS OR CHILDREN ADDICTED TO BEING POLITE.
AND SEATS CLOSE TO THE STAGE WOULD BE GREAT...
WHAT? NO, I WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR A "MEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY" EPISODE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YOU SPENT $200 ON BATHROOM CLEANERS THIS MONTH?!
YEAH. SCRUBBING BUBBLES.
YOU SPENT $200 FOR SCRUBBING BUBBLES?!
OKAY. I'M DONE CLEANING THE BATHROOM.
THANKS, BUBBLES!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

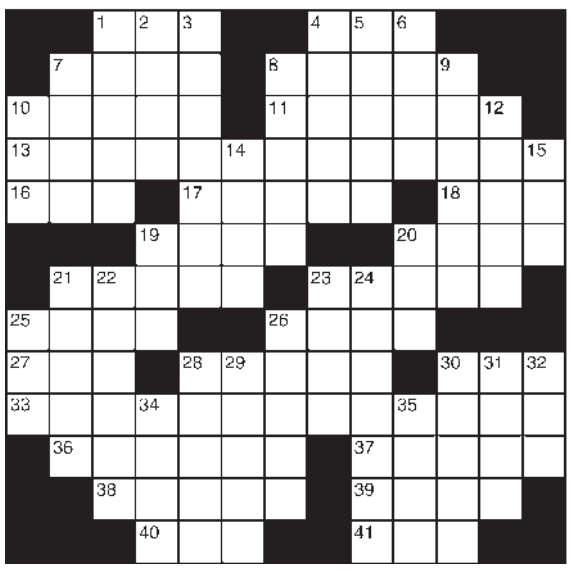
ACROSS
1 Step that may be "faux"
4 J. Edgar Hoover's org.
7 Harbor
8 Factories
10 Some Japanese-Americans
11 Eyes on a peacock's tail
13 No different
16 Firmament
17 Arose
18 Bronze
19 "Ask — questions ..."
20 Pleads
21 "It's a Wonderful Life" director
23 Obey a comma
25 St. Louis attraction
26 Spheres
27 Bleating sound
28 Pullover shirts
30 Pod occupant
33 Definitively
36 Youngster
37 Grown-up nit
38 "Hammerin' Hank" of baseball
39 Muskrat cousin
40 Chaps
41 Greek vowel

DOWN
1 Actress Parker
2 Neighborhood
3 Scorpion's weapon
4 Scarf enhancing a low neckline
5 Censor's sound
6 Afflictions
7 Light red
8 Slogan
9 Schedules
10 Ph. bk. info
12 Public persona
14 Lady of Lisbon
15 Type measures
19 Speedometer stat
20 Clear the tables
21 Starter on a really old car
22 Gum arabic
23 Instructor, for short
24 Set free, as from a sin
25 Latin 101 word
26 Bygone
28 Chaplain
29 Satirical newspaper, with "The"
30 Abdul or Zahn
31 Otherwise
32 Brewery output
34 Cheese choice
35 Source

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	R	U	F	■	C	O	F	■	Z	A	G	S
H	I	F	I	■	O	L	D	■	E	T	A	L
A	G	O	G	■	M	A	S	H	N	O	T	F
D	A	S	H	O	F	F	■	A	I	M	E	D
■	■	■	T	H	Y	■	T	N	T	■	■	■
S	E	I	S	M	■	C	A	S	H	C	A	B
A	R	T	■	■	T	U	X	■	■	O	D	E
L	A	S	H	O	U	T	■	P	U	T	O	N
■	■	■	I	N	N	■	F	A	N	■	■	■
W	Y	A	T	T	■	H	A	S	H	T	A	G
R	A	S	H	O	M	O	N	■	O	R	G	Y
A	L	E	E	■	A	B	C	■	L	I	A	R
P	E	A	R	■	T	O	Y	■	Y	O	R	E

Yesterday's answer 3-9



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Bow Wow, 24; Brittany Snow, 25; Juliette Binoche, 47; Mickey Gilley, 75

Happy Birthday: This is a great year for personal change. Whether you alter your image or your status, it will work to your benefit. Offering your services will lead to financial gain, respect and long-term contracts. Involvement in a cause will bring about interesting new friendships and greater possibilities. Your numbers are 9, 11, 18, 25, 33, 43, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't lose your temper when what is required is love, not criticism and name-calling. Refine your approach when dealing with people who don't see things the same way you do. Play fair. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): What you offer others will be appreciated and the favor returned. Getting involved in an activity or with an energetic group will help you look and feel your best. If there is something bothering you at work, talk to your superior. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You can sway some of the people you deal with but not everyone will buy into your charm. Prepare to answer some tough questions. Be straightforward. Do not give the impression you are hiding something. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't stop until you have exhausted all possibilities. What you do today can make a difference to the way the rest of your year will unfold. Being progressive and even a little bit pushy will pay off when it comes to advancement. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): The best part of the day will be socializing with colleagues or friends. Trying to spice things up will entice someone you want to impress. Don't reveal how you feel just yet. Keep someone guessing if you want to get a successful response. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Take action now and you will learn a lot from what you experience. A change in attitude regarding money matters will help you clear up a misconception someone has about you. Play to win and you will. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't get caught in someone else's melodrama. You may not want to rock the boat but if it means you will be blamed for something you didn't do, you had better speak up. Take a cordial but firm approach to any problem you face. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Bury yourself in what you enjoy working at the most. Don't be afraid to take an unusual approach to life, love and finding happiness. Alterations at home will make your life more interesting and allow you greater freedom. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Not everyone will like what you are doing or how you are treating the people around you. Complaints can be expected, especially if you exaggerate or push others to do things your way. You cannot force anyone to be your friend or lover. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You can make some marked improvements to your surroundings both at work and at home. If you feel more comfortable, you will do better and excel further. Have patience when dealing with children, parents or your lover. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): If something isn't working stop going against the grain when what's required is symmetry. You can have a lot more than you realize by offering help and suggestions and listening to the way the people you care most about are feeling. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Someone you meet is likely to play an emotional game with you. Cut to what's important and intervene if you must. You must put your own plans first if you want to reach your deadline or goal. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are compassionate and can relate to others. You are open to ideas and imaginative in everything you do.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5				9		
6			8		7			1
	7		4	2	9		6	
		7				6		
4		1				7		3
	9	6				5	2	
		2				4		
	5		2	6	3		8	
	6						7	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	2	7	9	5	8	6	1	3
9	1	8	6	3	4	2	5	7
6	3	5	2	7	1	4	9	8
3	5	6	7	4	9	8	2	1
1	4	9	3	8	2	5	7	6
8	7	2	5	1	6	3	4	9
2	9	3	1	6	5	7	8	4
5	6	4	8	9	7	1	3	2
7	8	1	4	2	3	9	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/08

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

SHOWCASE NETWORK **Solution: 6 letters**

R	C	C	E	A	E	E	X	I	R	T	A	M	M	I
E	O	N	R	N	V	C	F	O	R	E	I	G	N	O
S	L	T	O	E	C	I	N	O	S	N	N	D	E	Y
C	D	Z	L	I	W	O	D	L	I	I	E	C	T	V
U	S	I	P	A	T	H	I	S	T	P	N	L	N	S
E	Q	T	X	T	E	C	E	S	E	E	A	I	E	A
M	U	A	E	U	E	R	A	N	G	I	G	D	C	V
E	A	E	V	N	I	C	D	I	C	N	N	A	D	I
W	D	P	A	E	D	E	L	E	I	A	N	E	Ⓐ	N
A	O	E	S	A	N	L	P	H	P	A	R	Ⓡ	C	G
T	C	R	O	T	E	S	S	X	D	I	Ⓣ	E	O	G
C	A	R	L	T	S	A	E	I	A	Ⓢ	S	W	M	R
H	B	Y	N	D	C	H	A	N	N	E	L	O	E	A
M	L	I	F	B	O	N	E	S	U	O	H	P	D	C
T	E	L	E	V	I	S	I	O	N	C	I	S	Y	E

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Action, Aired, Arts, Bones, Broadcasting, Cable, Canadian, Cashing In, Channel, Choice, Cold Squad, Comedy, Crew, Diva, Episode, Expand, Explore, Film, Foreign, House, Independently, Intelligence, Matrix, Miniseries, NCIS, Power, Realtor, Repeat, Rescue Me, Save, Saving Grace, Slice, Sonic, Specialty, Television, Tune, Watch, World, Zone

Yesterday's Answer: Patent

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Minimum requirements:

1. **U.S. citizen or green card;**
2. **Driver's license;**
3. **Ability to speak English;**
4. **Police clearance;**
5. **References.**

For interview please call Maya at 233-0081

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• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:

- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Find today's solution in this section

Anthony, Stoudemire lead Knicks to rout of Jazz

NEW YORK (AP)—Carmelo Anthony scored 34 points, Amare Stoudemire added 31, and the New York Knicks showed how dangerous they can be when their superstars are rolling, beating the Utah Jazz 131-109 on Monday night.

Anthony and Stoudemire combined to make 24 of 31 shots, then were on the bench for the entire final period. Stoudemire departed long before the third even ended, shooting 12-of-15 in just 24 minutes, and Anthony soon joined him after his first 30-point game with the Knicks.

Toney Douglas had 20 points in a strong start in place of the injured Chauncey Billups as the Knicks moved a game ahead of Philadelphia for sixth place in the Eastern Conference. New York shot 56 percent from the field in its highest-scoring effort of the season.

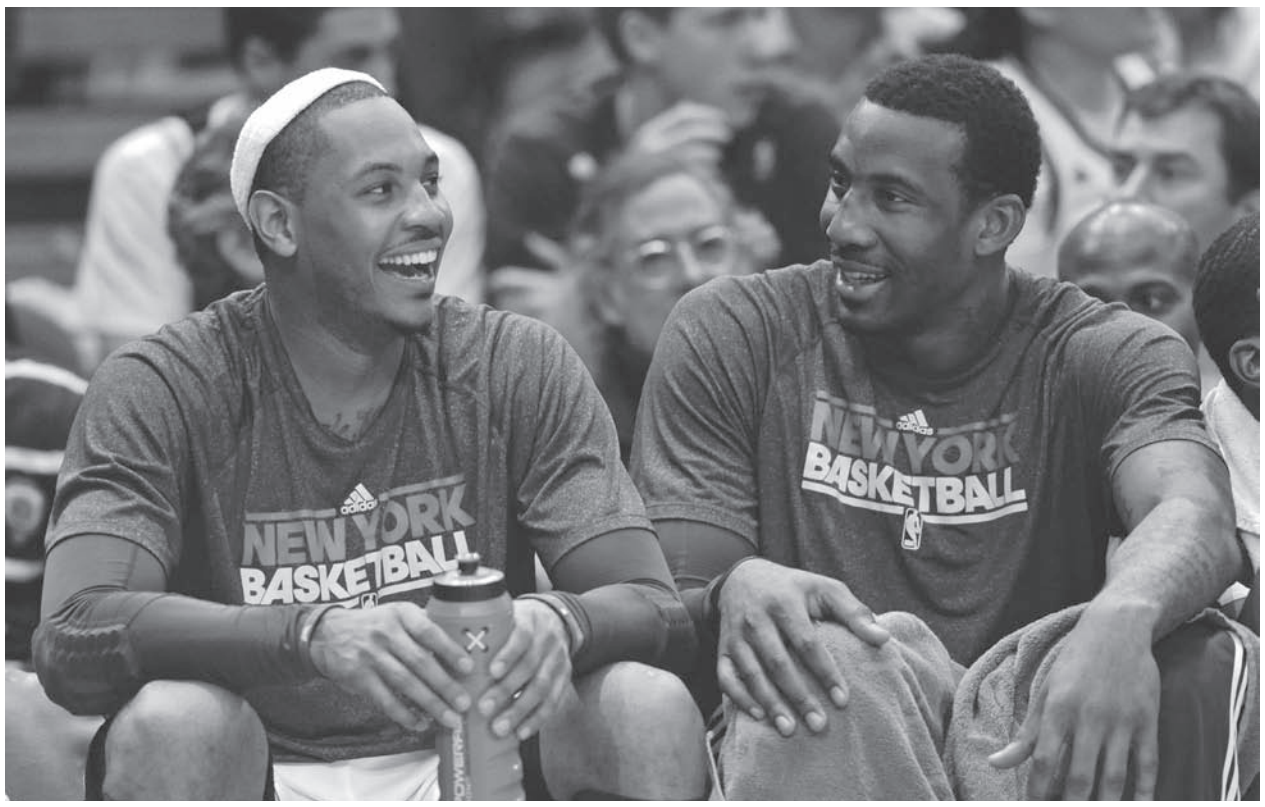
Al Jefferson scored a season-high 36 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Jazz, who opened an important four-game road trip by losing for the ninth time in 11 games. Utah came in tied for ninth in the West, at risk of falling hopelessly behind after the resignation of Hall of Fame Jerry Sloan and trade of All-Star point guard Deron Williams.

With former heavyweight champ Joe Frazier sitting courtside to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his victory over Muhammad Ali here, the Knicks delivered an early knockout, scoring 40 points in the first quarter and never letting Utah get close from there.

A night after their best defensive performance of the season in a 92-79 victory at Atlanta, the Knicks revved up their offense for this one. Anthony was only 6 of 18 for 14 points Sunday, saying afterward he had blurry vision and a migraine after being poked in the eye.

He had no problem finding the basket in this one.

His pull-up jumper was on the mark, and he hit 4 of 5 when he stepped beyond the 3-point line. The Knicks led 102-74 after three, and fans began chanting for seldom-used rookie Andy Rautins, who got in midway through the final quarter.



AP
New York Knicks' Carmelo Anthony, left, and Amar'e Stoudemire look on from the bench during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz at Madison Square Garden, Monday, March 7, 2011, in New York.

Trail Blazers 89, Magic 85

At Orlando, Florida, LaMarcus Aldridge scored 24 points and Andre Miller added 15 as Portland held on to beat Orlando, which were without the suspended Dwight Howard.

Portland won its third straight, and 10th in 13 games. The Blazers also swept the two-game season series with Orlando.

Marcus Camby was held scoreless, but had 10 rebounds to help the Blazers fend off a late rally by the Magic.

Orlando lost its second consecutive game and dropped to 1-2 this season without Howard, who sat out while serving a one-game suspension after picking up his 16th technical foul Friday. Jason Richardson led Orlando with 22 points.

Bulls 85, Hornets 77

At Chicago, Derrick Rose scored 24 points as Chicago beat New Orleans with Hornets star Chris Paul sidelined by a concussion.

The four-time All-Star watched from the sideline after colliding with Cleveland's Ramon Sessions in Sunday's win and remains day to day. Without him, the Hornets put up a fight against the Central division leaders but were shut out over the final 3:15.

Carlos Boozer added 19 points and nine rebounds, and Ronnie Brewer and Luol Deng scored 10.

Jarrett Jack, starting in Paul's place, led the Hornets with 23 points.

Clippers 92, Bobcats 87

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Blake Griffin had 17 points and 15 rebounds as the Los Angeles Clippers had more offensive options than Charlotte.

With Eric Gordon sidelined again with more wrist problems, the Clippers got 17 points from Mo Williams, and 16 points and 10 rebounds off the bench from Chris Kaman in their third straight victory.

Gerald Henderson scored 20 points and Boris Diaw added 15 of his 19 points in the first half for the Bobcats.

Grizzlies 107, Thunder 101

At Memphis, Tennessee, Mike Conley and Tony Allen each scored 20 points, and Marc Gasol added 18 as Memphis withstood a second-half rally to defeat Oklahoma City.

Zach Randolph added 17 points for Memphis, including four free throws in the closing seconds, as the Grizzlies maintained their hold on the eighth playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Russell Westbrook had 27 points and seven assists for Oklahoma City, which saw its three-game winning streak snapped.

Mavericks 108, Timberwolves 105

At Minneapolis, Dirk Nowitzki overcame foul trouble to score 25 points in 27 minutes and help Dallas outlast Minnesota.

Nowitzki picked up his fourth foul early in the third quarter, and Brian Cardinal stepped in to score a season-high 12 points for the Mavericks in their 19th win in 21 games.

Kevin Love had 23 points and 17 rebounds for Minnesota. He posted his 51st double-double in a row, which is equal with Moses Malone in 1978-79 for the longest streak since the NBA-ABA merger in 1976.

Michael Beasley added 20 points and nine rebounds for the worst team in the Western Conference, who gave the powerful Mavericks all they could handle.

Rockets 123, Kings 101

At Sacramento, California, Chad Budinger scored 20 points and Kyle Lowry had 19 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Houston, which defeated Sacramento to give coach Rick Adelman his 935th win as an NBA coach.

The victory tied Adelman with Dick Motta for 10th on the career coaching victories list. Among the top 10 in wins, only Phil Jackson and Red Auerbach have better winning percentages than Adelman (.605, 935-609).

Besides being a significant win for Adelman, it was also one for the Rockets (33-32), who moved over .500 for the first time all season. Houston has won two straight and seven of eight.

DeMarcus Cousins had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings, who lost their third straight and fifth in six games.

Wade insists Heat are 'fine' after emotional loss

MIAMI (AP)—Having LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh together was supposed to be the Miami Heat formula for many championships.

And it might. Someday.

Right now, it isn't. With the playoffs a little more than a month away, time is running out.

So maybe it was fitting that Heat coach Erik Spoelstra had his back to the wall of Miami's practice court Monday when trying his best to clear up "Crygate." Here was his clarification: He saw glossy eyes, but heard no whimpering.

Ultimately, little of that matters. A day after Spoelstra said there was "a couple guys crying in the locker room" in the moments that followed Sunday's 87-86 loss to the Chicago Bulls—the latest entry in a growing list of last-second chances gone awry—whether tears were falling or not is irrelevant.

Shots aren't falling.

That's the bigger issue for the Heat, who have lost four straight and are early in their toughest stretch of the season. Portland, hardly a slouch from the suddenly surging Western Conference, visits on Tuesday. Kobe Bryant and the two-time defending champion Lakers, who just happened to roll a San Antonio team that embarrassed the Heat last week, stop by Thursday. The Spurs visit next Monday.

Even with that, the Heat confidence remains.

"We're a team that no one wants to see in the first round," Wade said. "We lose every game from here on out, somebody's got to see us in the first round. And the Miami Heat isn't really a team you want to see in the first round.

"We're fine."

That's debatable.

Despite the "Big Three" averaging a combined 69.9 points, 22.4 rebounds and 13.3 assists, the Heat have clear issues, including consistency at point guard and center along with the bench. In the public eye, every loss seems almost cataclysmic. There's often speculation over Spoelstra's security with the Heat, especially with a Hall of Famer in Pat Riley still looming over the franchise.

They're 43-20, the league's sixth-best record—not the pace James grew accustomed to when he was the lone true superstar with the Cleveland Cavaliers, who had been among the league's very best. They've had their moments, like a big Christmas win against the Lakers, a late-game rally to win at Oklahoma City, a run of 21 victories in 22 games from Nov. 29 through Jan. 9. That run started after James bumped Spoelstra on the way to a huddle in Dallas and speculation started raining that the Heat were already finished.

Take that stretch away, though, and the Heat are 22-19.

Not the stuff from which titles are made.

"At the end of the day, we're in a good position right now, in the Eastern Conference and in the whole league," James said. "We get a win, we'll be all right."

James was saying the other day that he'd rather get blown out in a game than lose at the buzzer, and at this point, it's easy to see why he thinks that way.

The Heat have lost 11 games already this season in which they had a chance to take the lead or tie the score in the final 12 seconds of regulation or overtime. The team is shooting 1 for 19 in those situations, and the one make—a dunk by James against Memphis way back in November to tie the game—came in a game the Heat lost on a Rudy Gay jumper as time expired.

James is 1 for 8 in those situations. Wade is 0 for 3, as is Mike Miller. Eddie House and Mario Chalmers are 0 for 2. Bosh is 0 for 1.

"Growing pains," Wade said.

That wasn't a case of self-loathing from Wade when he sarcastically said Sunday that "the world is better now that the Heat is losing." This team has known from the very beginning that opponents would get up for them and they would be booed in every road arena in which they play.

Bulls forward Joakim Noah says the contempt for Miami may cut even more deeply.

He relayed a story about walking on Miami Beach Saturday, getting recognized by some fans who had a message.

"I was pretty amazed ... so many people saying 'Beat the Heat' in their own hometown," Noah said. "In Chicago, I don't think that happens."

What Spoelstra dubbed "Crygate" was the talk in the New York locker room Sunday night after the Knicks beat Atlanta. And on Monday, former Heat coach Stan Van Gundy weighed in on the state of Miami during his morning availability with reporters in Orlando.

"My suggestion would be if you don't want the scrutiny," the Magic coach was saying, "you don't hold a championship celebration before you even practice together. ... I think the players thought it was going to be easy and they were going to roll over everybody. It hasn't materialized that way."

For the record, the Heat say they accept the scrutiny.

"I find it kind of humorous," Spoelstra said.

James said he feels the same way, at times.

Go back to what the NBA's two-time reigning MVP said when asked on July 9 - the night of their rock-star-esque welcoming ceremony at the Heat home arena - which one of the he, Wade and Bosh trilogy would be taking the last shots at the end of games.

"One game or one possession," James said that night, "is not going to define who we are."

True.

A defining moment, however, is coming. And at this point, the Heat can't feel great about their chances when it arrives.

NFL, union talk 4 hours; plan to resume Tuesday

WASHINGTON (AP)—Trying to work their way to a new labor deal, Commissioner Roger Goodell and NFL Players Association head DeMaurice Smith resumed negotiations for four hours Monday.

With both sides adhering to mediator George Cohen's admonition that they not discuss the talks publicly, it wasn't clear how much—if any—progress was made in the shorter-than-usual session. The only sure thing: The sides planned to meet again Tuesday.

The current collective bargaining agreement originally was set to expire last week, but two extensions have now pushed the cutoff to the end of Friday. After months of infrequent formal negotiations and plenty of acrimony, the sides have spent 12 days at the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service, but they still remain apart on key economic issues.

What will happen the rest of this week is still anyone's guess. If a deal isn't reached, the sides could agree to yet another extension and negotiate beyond Friday. Or talks could break off, leading to, possibly, a lockout by owners or antitrust lawsuits by players.

The NFL has not lost games to a work stoppage in nearly a quarter-century, and by agreeing to continue with mediation, the league and union made it clear neither was quite ready to make the drastic move of shutting down a sport that rakes in more than $9 billion a year in revenues and is more popular than ever. The past two Super Bowls rank No. 1 and No. 2 among most-watched TV programs in U.S. history.

The old CBA was agreed to in 2006, and owners exercised an opt-out clause in 2008, leading to the current stalemate.

Money, not surprisingly, is at the center of it all.

One person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press last week that the NFLPA has not agreed to any major economic concessions—and that the NFL has not agreed to the union's long-held demand that the league completely open its books and share all financial information.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Cohen insists that everyone involved stay mum about the substance of the talks.

The key issues have been:

■ How to divide revenues, including what cut team owners should get up front to help cover costs such as stadium construction and improvement. Under the old deal, owners received about $1 billion off the top. They entered these negotiations seeking to add another $1 billion to it.

■ A rookie wage scale, and where money saved by teams under that system would go.

AP

DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the NFL Players Association, leaves following negotiations between the union and the NFL, Monday, March 7, 2011, in Washington.

■ Benefits for retired players.

■ The owners' push to expand the regular season from 16 games to 18 while reducing the preseason by two games.

For players to agree to a longer regular season, they would want substantial reductions in offseason workouts, minicamps and training camp. Should they get that, and if Smith can coax, say, five extra roster spots per team - resulting in 160 more jobs for players—perhaps the league and union could find common ground in that particular area.

Still, as Washington Redskins union representative Vonnie Holliday explained succinctly last week: "There's been some progress made. There's still a ways to go on major issues."

Raiders hire Bresnahan as defensive coordinator

ALAMEDA, Calif. (AP)—The Oakland Raiders promoted assistant Chuck Bresnahan to defensive coordinator Monday, just weeks after bringing him back for a second stint with the organization.

Oakland hired Bresnahan last month as a defensive assistant, but did not immediately specify his duties. Coach Hue Jackson said he had talked to some people outside the organization about the job, but stuck with a coach he had worked with before in Cincinnati.

"The fact that I've had the chance to be in defensive meetings with Chuck and watch him lead the defensive staff made it an easy decision to name him our defensive coordinator," Jackson said in a statement. "I am impressed with his passion, attention to detail and energy. This staff gives us the opportunity to have one of the top defenses in the NFL."

The Raiders have made significant changes on their defensive staff since Jackson replaced Tom Cable as head coach in January. Hall of Famer Rod Woodson was brought on to coach the cornerbacks and Greg Biekert was promoted to linebackers coach.

Both Woodson and Biekert played for Bresnahan during his stint as defensive coordinator of the Raiders from 2000-03. Oakland won the AFC West in his first three seasons and went to the Super Bowl following his third year in 2002.

"This is an incredible opportunity for me to come back to the Raiders and work again where we had so many great years," said Bresnahan, who was also a defensive backs coach in Oakland in 1998-99. "It's so exciting to be reunited with Hue Jackson because of the passion and energy that he brings. I'm also thrilled to be a part of this talented staff, many of whom I've shared previous success with."

The Raiders have been aggressive so far this offseason about keeping some of their key potential free agents on the defensive side of the ball. Oakland gave cornerback Stanford Routt a three-year, $31.5 million deal, signed defensive tackle Richard Seymour to a $30 million, two-year contract, placed an $11,312,000 franchise tag on linebacker Kamerion Wimbley that has already been signed, and agreed to an $8 million, two-year contract with defensive tackle John Henderson.

Oakland has two other key defensive free agents in Pro Bowl cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha and safety Michael Huff. Decisions on those two players won't be made until after a new collective bargaining agreement is reached.

Regardless of what happens with Asomugha and Huff, the Raiders have some talented, young defenders whom they believe can be part of a stellar defense. Oakland's top two draft picks from last year, middle linebacker Rolando McClain and defensive end Lamarr Houston started right away as rookies and showed promise.

Defensive tackle Tommy Kelly had his best season with seven sacks and Oakland has high hopes for safeties Tyvon Branch and Mike Mitchell, linebackers Trevor Scott and Travis Goethel, and defensive tackle Desmond Bryant.

Judge allows steroids testimony of former players

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Longtime San Francisco Giants clubhouse manager Mike Murphy will testify about Barry Bonds' hat size, a Nike employee will discuss the slugger's feet and prosecutors will show the jury photographs of Bonds' growing physique during his career, court papers filed Monday showed.

In a witness list filed Monday, prosecutors outlined their planned evidence, most of which has been made public since a grand jury started meeting more than seven years ago. The prosecution said former San Francisco Giants teammate Bobby Estalella, and former Bonds girlfriend Kimberly Bell will testify Bonds told them he used steroids.

In addition, they said former Bonds assistant Steve Hoskins will testify he learned of Bonds' steroids use from both Bonds and personal trainer Greg Anderson, who is refusing to testify. And Kathy Hoskins, Bonds' former personal shopper, will testify she saw Bonds being injected by Anderson.

Bonds has been indicted on four counts of making false statements to a grand jury and one count of obstruction of justice for telling the grand jury he never took steroids or human growth hormone from Anderson, took only vitamins from Anderson and was injected only by physicians. He has pleaded not guilty.

The filings Monday include nine photographs of Bonds throughout his career, first as an Arizona State Sun Devil, then a Pittsburgh Pirate and finally a San Francisco Giant. Murphy, who started as a 16-year-old batboy with the Giants and been on the team's payroll for 53 years, also will be asked about Bonds' apparent growth in those photographs, according to the court filing Monday.

"The clubhouse manager for the San Francisco Giants will testify as to the increase in the defendant's hat size," federal prosecutor Jeff Nedrow states in the court filing.

The Nike employee is expected to tell the jury that Bonds' shoe size grew. Prosecutors argue that head and feet growth are a side effect of steroid use.

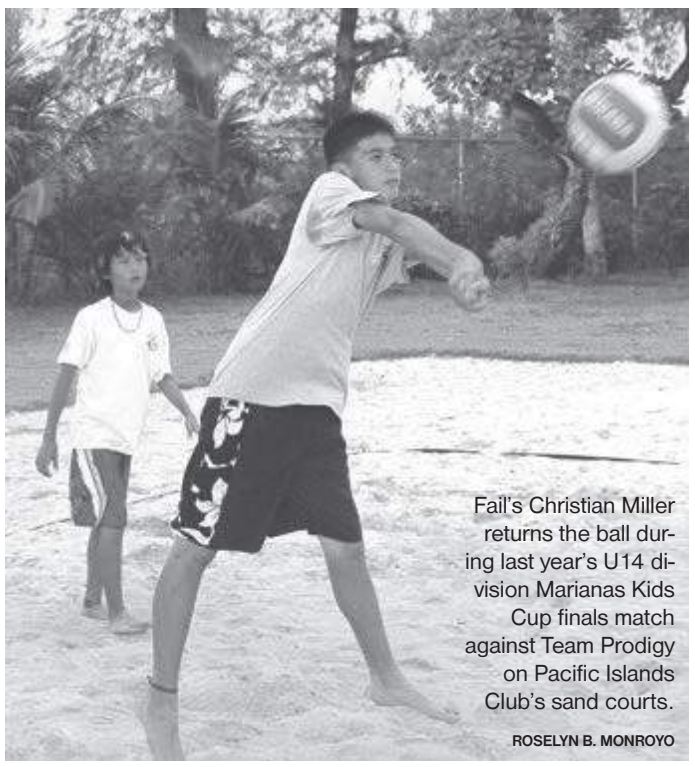
Also Monday, U.S. District Court Judge Susan Illston ruled that testimony of former baseball players and their relationship with Bonds' former personal trainer during the slugger's trial scheduled to start March 21.

Other baseball players are expected to testify that Anderson provided them with performance-enhancing drugs and detailed instructions on how to use them.

Bonds' lawyers argued that their testimony shouldn't be allowed because Anderson is refusing to testify and therefore cannot corroborate their stories.

But Illston ruled Monday that prosecutors can use the testimony to support their position that Anderson supplied Bonds with the same drugs and instructions that others received.

Marianas Kids Cup this Sunday



Fail's Christian Miller returns the ball during last year's U14 division Marianas Kids Cup finals match against Team Prodigy on Pacific Islands Club's sand courts.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Islands Volleyball Association's 2011 Marianas Kids Cup takes place this Sunday at the Fiesta Resort& Spa Saipan sand courts.

Registration starts at 8am and the first set of games tips off at 9am.

The co-ed tournament conhas a four-on-four format, where at least one female player must remain on the court at all times; a maximum of five players are allowed per team. The event features U14 and U17 divisions.

There is a $10 entrance fee to participate and NMIVA members receive a $5 discount. Prizes will be awarded to the Top 3 finishers in each division and all participants will receive drinks and an event t-shirt.

Last year Fail and Sons of Beaches won their respective U14 and U17 divisions.

Fails' Clay McCullough-Stearns, Jake Lee, Christian Miller, Ilia Corella, and Minori Yoshida went undefeated in the double-elimination tournament and clinched the U14 division title after beating Team Prodigy in the finals, 21-17.

Sons of Beaches' Dae Min Jeon, C.J. Libut, Angelo Salas, Minsung Kim, and A.J. Batallones defeated All-Stars in the U17 championship, 21-12. Notably, Sons of Beaches also won the cup in 2009.

Early registration is available by contacting NMIVA's Mili Saiki at milisaiki@hotmail.com or call 288-9660.

IP&E

From Page 28

team leading by more than eight points. Mobil had its biggest lead, 68-60, in the early goings of the fourth period before a 13-6 scoring binge moved Hoops within one, 73-74, 53 seconds to go in the game.

Jorge De Guzman made it 76-73 after connecting on his patented reverse layup, redeeming himself from an earlier booboo where he missed two crucial free throws.

Hoops also muffed important charities when Dave Sablan, the hero in the team's 94-93 playoff win over the Ol'Aces, missed two in the next play.

Jun Estolas upped the lead to four, 77-73, after splitting his free throws off a Sablan foul—his fifth and last. However, despite the absence of Sablan, Hoops refused to give up and cut the lead to one anew when Jawn Joyner drove to the baskets, drew a foul, and completed a three-point play, 76-77, with 10 seconds to go in the match.

Mobil sued for time, but committed an error when the game resumed, as Bon Tamayo was caught stepping on the sideline while receiving an inbound pass.

With both teams out of time outs, the Hoops' Ponce Rasa went for a quick inbound and it seemed deja vu for the Jerry Diaz-coached squad. Against the Ol'Aces, the Hoops had a quick inbound in the closing seconds of the game and Rasa passed the ball to John Sablan, who then threw a pitch to Dave Sablan for the game-winning jumper.

However, against Mobil, Dave Sablan was out of the picture, so after receiving the inbound pass, John Sablan was forced to dribble through the sideline and ran out of space. Possession returned to Mobil and the Hoops quickly fouled Estolas.

Estolas faltered both free throws, but grabbed the offensive rebound off his own miss, with four seconds left in the match. Estolas uncharacteristically missed his third straight free throw before canning his last for Mobil's 78-76 lead.

The Hoops made an inbound from the backcourt and when Rasa received the leather, he fumbled a bit and was forced to pull up a shot from halfcourt and badly missed, securing the win for Mobil.

With the second and last finals seat at stake in the Mobil-Hoops tiff, spectators witnessed a heated game. A couple of technical fouls were called and players were warned on several occasions. Ponce Rasa and Marvin Rabauliman were each slapped with a technical foul in the second quarter for second motion, while James Villacrusis was thrown out of the game for head-butting Ron Gamboa.

Rabauliman paced Mobil with 25 points, while Estolas finished with 15. Gamboa came off the bench and contributed 13.

Joyner led the Hoops with 19, eight less from his output against Ol'Aces. Dave Sablan finished with 17, but was held to only a field goal in the fourth quarter. John Sablan was the biggest missing link on Hoops' offense, as he was scoreless against Mobil. John Sablan had 17 points in their win over the Ol'Aces.

In the first game, IP&E Konflikt jumped to a 14-2 lead in the first three minutes of the game, taking NMC Proa out of its rhythm early en route to an easy win.

Proa recovered a bit in the closing part of the first canto, moving within eight, 15-23. However, NMC played its worst offensive game in the second canto, tallying only six points, allowing IP&E Konflikt to pull away at the break, 44-21. IP&E Konflikt's lead never went down to single digits from thereon.

Kae Bernardo paced IP&E with 19 points, while Elmer Esdrelon and Ivan De Vero chipped in 18 and 17.

Pete Iguel logged 21 for Proa, 15 less than his output in their playoff win over Satbahi and earned most of them when the game was already decided. Dan Barcinas added 15, also below his 27-point production in their last game. NMC played without the injured Pete Mendiola and the suspended Jack Lizama.

First Game

IP&E Konflikt 85 – Bernardo 19, Esdrelon 18, De Vero 17, Talania 8, Santos 7, Tumaquip 6, Capalad 2, Guiab 2, De Dios 2.

NMC Proa 66 – Iguel 21, Ruluked 16, D. Barcinas 15, A. Barcinas 4, Libuw 2, Johnson 2, Villacrusis 1.

Scoring by quarters: 23-15, 44-21, 66-42, 85-66.

Second Game

Mobil 78 – Rabauliman 25, Estolas 14, Gamboa 13, Tamayo 8, De Guzman 5, Basila 4, Gapor 4, Sharry 1.

Hoopaholics 76 – Joyner 19, D. Sablan 17, Villacrusis 9, Manibusan 6, Fitial 6, P. Rasa 5, I. Rasa 4, Mendez 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-22, 43-40, 65-58, 78-76.

JETS

From Page 28

distance and gave up one earned run off five hits and three walks with eight strikeouts.

Jets 12, McDonald's 0

Jets' pitcher Ben Maratita struck out the side in the top of the first and his team amassed a 6-0 lead in the bottom frame off a double by Nathan Camacho, a triple by Harvey Matagolai, two errors, a passed ball, and a wild pitch.

McDonald's went 1-2-3 to start the second and the Jets added three runs to their lead off a double by Thomas Dela Cruz and a pair of passed balls.

Maratita retired the side in the top of the third and his team went ahead, 12-0, in the bottom frame off passed balls and a walk with the bases loaded.

Maratita struck out the side in McDonald's last stand and finished a no-hitter with just two walks and 10 punch-outs in just 13 batters.

Red Sox 13, Ol'Aces 1

Ol'Aces' Joe Carreon broke the ice when he stole home to score his team's only run in the top of the second inning, but it was unfortunate that Ol'Aces loaded the bases and only came away with one.

It wound up hurting Ol'Aces as the Red Sox answered with five runs in the top of the third. Jonathan Sagun managed to steal the plate and the rest came in off errors; the Red Sox only recorded one hit in the inning.

The Red Sox then piled on eight more runs in the fifth after a quiet fourth inning. Delin Reusora busted a RBI double, Regino Celis and Jonathan Camacho had RBI singles, and the rest came off a fielder's choice and a bunch off errors. The Ol'Aces left runners at first and second in their final stand. Winning pitcher Joby Reyes went all five and gave up one unearned run off three hits, three walks, and a bean ball with 11 strikeouts.

IP&E Strikers 22, Braves 7

IP&E Strikers started early with three runs in the first inning off an RBI rip by Juden Joyner and a two-RBI double by Keith Fernandez.

The Braves did not answer in the bottom frame and IP&E jumped ahead, 7-0, in the second off a passed ball and a two-RBI triple by Perry Celis; Celis later stole home.

The Braves managed a run off an error in the bottom half, but IP&E piled on five more runs in the top of the third off an error, three passed balls, and an RBI double by Dwayne Reyes.

The Braves then came up with five runs in the bottom frame off a pair of passed balls and a two-RBI double by Brandon Pua; Nathan Torres also stole home in the mix. The Braves drew six walks in the inning. IP& Joyner came to the mound in relief for Celis to close the last out.

Then IP&E pulled ahead, 14-6, with a couple of runs at the start of the fourth off errors.

Joyner struck out the side in the bottom frame and his team exploded with eight runs in the fifth inning. Celis led of with a solo shot, two runs scored later off an error and a wild pitch, followed by a walk and an out later by a two-run blast by Vince Laniyo. Another run came in off a passed ball before Joyner cleared the bases with a two-RBI double. The Braves only managed a pair of runs in their final stand. IP&E's' Celis batted 2-for-2 with a homerun, two RBIs, three base on balls, and five runs; Joyner swung 4-for-5 with three RBIs and three runs.

EAGLES

From Page 28

Then De Leon answered with back-to-back baskets to put GCA on top anew, 32-28. Del Rosario made it a six-point lead, 34-28, as after he blocked Agape's Bruce Li, he sprinted to the frontcourt for a good trail job and made a basket off De Leon's missed fastbreak layup.

Agape tried to recover from a six-point deficit in the last 1:19 of the match, but failed as they committed a five-second inbound violation and Jacky Zheng faltered a couple of shots, including two crucial free throws.

With the 24-second shot clock not in effect in the COPPSA league, GCA wisely used the clock and forced Agape to give up fouls. Del Rosario capped GCA's win with a follow-up banked shot off De Leon's miss as time expired.

In the first semis game, SIS played with only five players, but managed to eke out a one-point win over the Knights.

Behind at the end of the third period, 10-13, the Geckos held Mt. Carmel to only one free throw in the fourth quarter to clinch the first finals berth. Jordan Butcher paced SIS with five points, while Li Zhou Xu added three.

The Geckos will play the Eagles in the one-game finals tomorrow at 4:30pm after the girls division title game, which is set for 3:30pm.

Whispering Palms took the first finals ticket in the girls division, while SIS and GCA will dispute the second and last finals berth today.

First Game

SIS 15 – Butcher 5, Xu 3, Lee 2, Johnson 1.

MCS 14 – Castro 6, Pamintuan 3, Evangelista 2, Jung 2,

Scoring by quarters: 3-2, 5-9, 10-13, 15-14.

Second Game

GCA 36 – De Leon 19, Del Rosario 8, Hinson 4, Dong 2, Hernandez 1.

Agape 28 – Tao 16, Zheng 10, Li 2.

Scoring by quarter: 10-8, 12-15, 22-21, 36-28.

XTERRA

From Page 28

Over 100 participants are expected to compete in the off-road triathlon event, including defending champions Sam Gardner of United Kingdom and Renata Bucher of Switzerland. Joining the two pros are newly crowned XTERRA Philippines champion Shonny Vanlandingham, XTERRA Saipan first timers Carina Wasle and Suzie Snyder, and a bunch of Korean and Japanese triathletes.

All the trails for this Saturday's race have been cleared and organizer Taga, Inc. will just put some finishing touches on its preparation for the Crown Jewel of XTERRA World Tour in the remaining three days before the big event.

Check-in time for the weekend event is at 5am, while the race will begin at 6:30am.

After the XTERRA, the 2011 Saipan Sportsfest will continue next week with the staging of Tagaman Triathlon on March 20.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	46	15	.754	—
New York	33	29	.532	13 1/2
Philadelphia	32	30	.516	14 1/2
New Jersey	19	43	.306	27 1/2
Toronto	17	46	.270	30

Southeast Division

Miami	43	20	.683	—
Orlando	40	24	.625	3 1/2
Atlanta	37	26	.587	6
Charlotte	26	37	.413	17
Washington	16	46	.258	26 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	44	18	.710	—
Indiana	27	35	.435	17
Milwaukee	23	38	.377	20 1/2
Detroit	23	41	.359	22
Cleveland	12	50	.194	32

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	51	12	.810	—
Dallas	46	17	.730	5
New Orleans	37	29	.561	15 1/2
Memphis	36	29	.554	16
Houston	33	32	.508	19

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	39	23	.629	—
Denver	37	27	.578	3
Portland	36	27	.571	3 1/2
Utah	33	31	.516	7
Minnesota	15	50	.231	25 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	45	19	.703	—
Phoenix	32	29	.525	11 1/2
Golden State	27	35	.435	17
L.A. Clippers	24	40	.375	21
Sacramento	15	46	.246	28 1/2

x-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Games

L.A. Clippers 92, Charlotte 87
Portland 89, Orlando 85
New York 131, Utah 109
Chicago 85, New Orleans 77
Memphis 107, Oklahoma City 101
Dallas 108, Minnesota 105
Houston 123, Sacramento 101

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2011 Saipan Marathon

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Participants in the half marathon leave the starting line at the American Memorial Park.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Runners cruise along Beach Road during the early morning race.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School's Donivan Mendiola, right, poses with MHS coach and department chair Dr. Chas Algaier after winning a gold medal in the 2011 Saipan Marathon. After the marathon, Mendiola joined the NFL Thespian competition.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Japan's Satoshi Emoto smiles after receiving his gold medal in the full marathon.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Conatsu Kaga sprints to the finish line en route to winning the U14 division of the 10K race.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Elizabeth Elger celebrates her 10K finish.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A runner dressed in Spiderman costume crosses the finish line.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mamiko Oshima-Berger smiles, as she completes the full marathon.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Akiko Miller and his son near the finish line of the 10K race.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Japan's Takahashi Aoyama raises the tape after finishing first in the 10K race.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

IP&E vs Mobil in UBA finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

IP&E Konflikt and Mobil will bring their corporate rivalry to the court, as they set up a title duel in the 2nd Docomo Pacific/UBA Men's League, following separate semifinals wins on Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

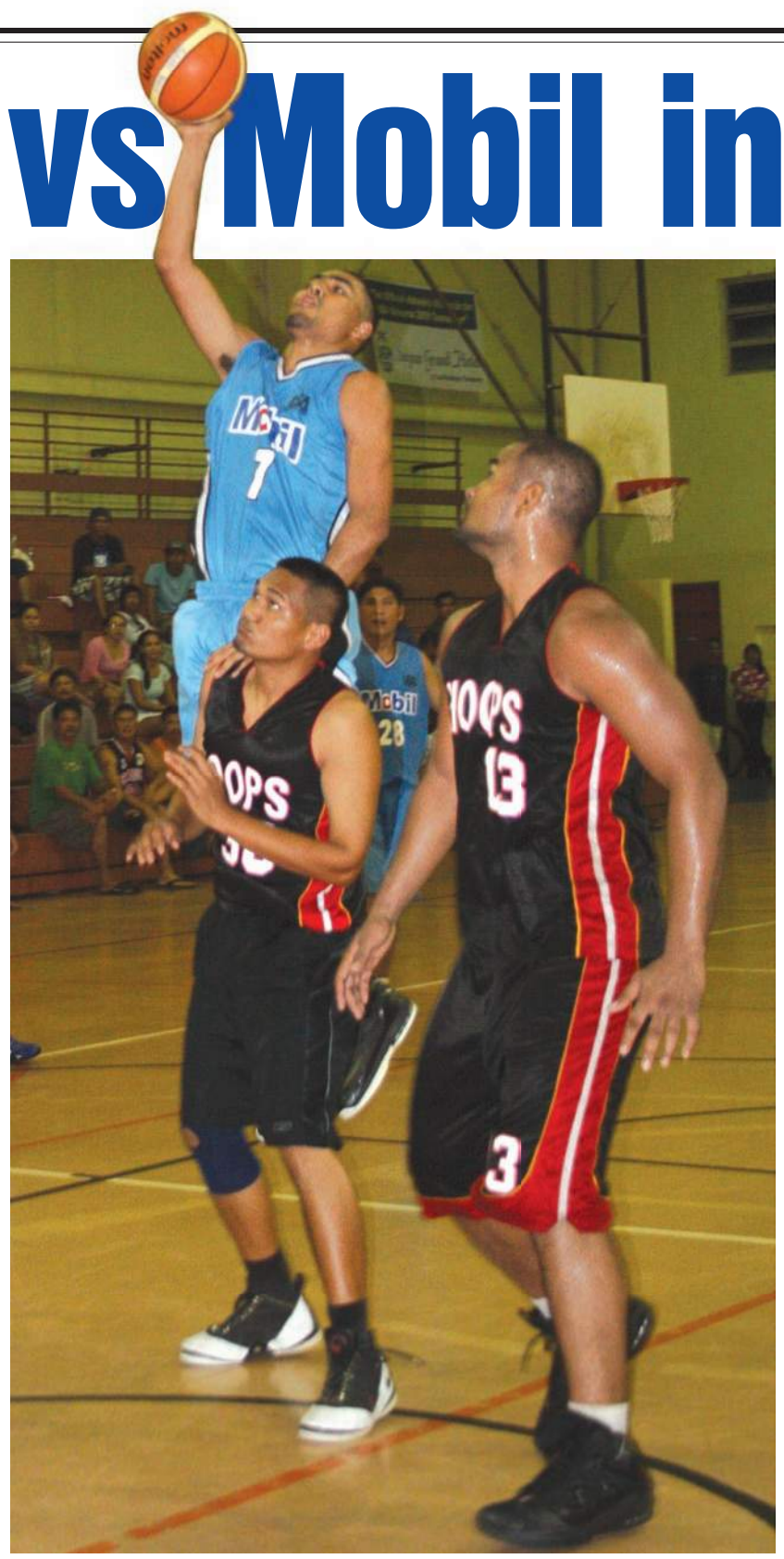
docomo PACIFIC UBA MEN'S BASKETBALL LEAGUE

IP&E Konflikt routed NMC Proa in the first semis match, 85-66, while Mobil survived the Hoopaholics in the second semis tiff, 78-76, to advance to the best-of-three finals series. Mobil and IP&E will play Game 1 of the finals tonight at 7pm.

While IP&E Konflikt had the victory as early as in the first half, it was a different story for Mobil, as its win did not come until the finals buzzer sounded.

The Hoopaholics and Mobil slugged it out from start to finish with neither

See IP&E on Page 26



Mobil's Marvin Rabauliman goes for up his patented one-handed shot against the Hoops' Walter Mendez during their semis game in the UBA/Docomo caging yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Eagles, Geckos set up JV title duel

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Grace Christian Academy and Saipan International School advanced to the finals of the boys junior varsity division of the 2010-2011 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association Basketball League after downing separate opponents yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Geckos booked the first finals berth after pulling off a come-from-behind win over Mt. Carmel School, 15-14, while the Eagles notched the second and last finals ticket after outgunning Agape, 36-28.

Karlo De Leon and Enrico Del Rosario played steady for GCA in the fourth quarter to lift the Eagles to an eight-point win. De Leon scored 18 points, 10 in the fourth period, while Del Rosario chipped in eight, four in the final canto, including a buzzer-beating banked shot.

Agape tied the match for the last time at 28-all, off Joseph Yang Tao's basket, with less than four minutes left on the clock.

See EAGLES on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Grace Christian Academy's Karlo De Leon scoots in for a layup against Agape defenders during their semis game in the junior varsity division of the COPPSA caging yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Jets lone undefeated team in Majors

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Juan S. Tenorio Jets are alone atop the Majors standings after securing their fifth win in a row via a 12-0 shutout over McDonald's in Saipan Little League action Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Ballfield.

Other winners over the weekend include the Rep. Joseph P. DL Guerrero-Tan Siu Lin-Mike P. Tenorio Dandan Comets, the Bank of Saipan Red Sox, and the IP&E Strikers.

On Saturday, the Comets bested the Docomo A's, 8-4, while the Red Sox routed Happy Market Ol'Aces, 13-1. Then IP&E torched the Natibu Tanapag Braves, 22-7, in Sunday's first game.

Comets 8, Docomo A's 4

The Comets took a 2-1 lead off a passed ball in the bottom of the second inning after both teams managed a run in the opening frame.

Both teams went 1-2-3 in the third and Docomo briefly reclaimed the lead, 3-2, in the top half of the third off a RBI base rip by Christian Lizama; he later scored off an error, but the Comets answered and shot ahead, 6-3, in the bottom frame off a couple of errors and an RBI single by Erik Cruz; he later scored off a passed ball.

Docomo did not answer to start the fifth and the Comets added two more runs off a two-RBI base hit by Cassius Fitial. Winning pitcher Cruz went the

See JETS on Page 26

An IP&E player delivers a pitch in their Saipan Little League Majors division matchup against the Little Legals last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Ballfield.
WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND

XTERRA Fun Run to kick off Saipan Sportsfest

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2011 Saipan Sportsfest will kick off this Friday with the traditional XTERRA Sunset 5K/10K Trail Run/Walk.

Registration for the fun run is ongoing, but interested participants are encouraged to register before the race on Friday. Registration on the day of the event starts at 4pm, while check-in time is at 4:30pm at Micro Beach. The race/run will start at 5pm and awards ceremony is at 6pm. Registration fee is $20 and can be made at the DFS Yen Exchange Booth for early birds.

Organizers are hoping runners from various schools will join the race, as half of the proceeds of the event will go to Northern Marianas Athletics, while a portion of it will be donated to the Marianas Tourism Education Council

The 5K and 10K course will bring runners through the marina at the American Memorial Park compound and along the beachside path to see the famous Saipan Sunset.

Meanwhile, today is the last day to register for this Saturday's 2011 XTERRA Saipan Championship. Registration can be done online at www.saipansports.com or at the Marianas Visitors Authority office in San Jose.

See XTERRA on Page 26